

TOP STORY: The lynching of Lani Guinier
June 14-27, 1993

IN THESE TIMES

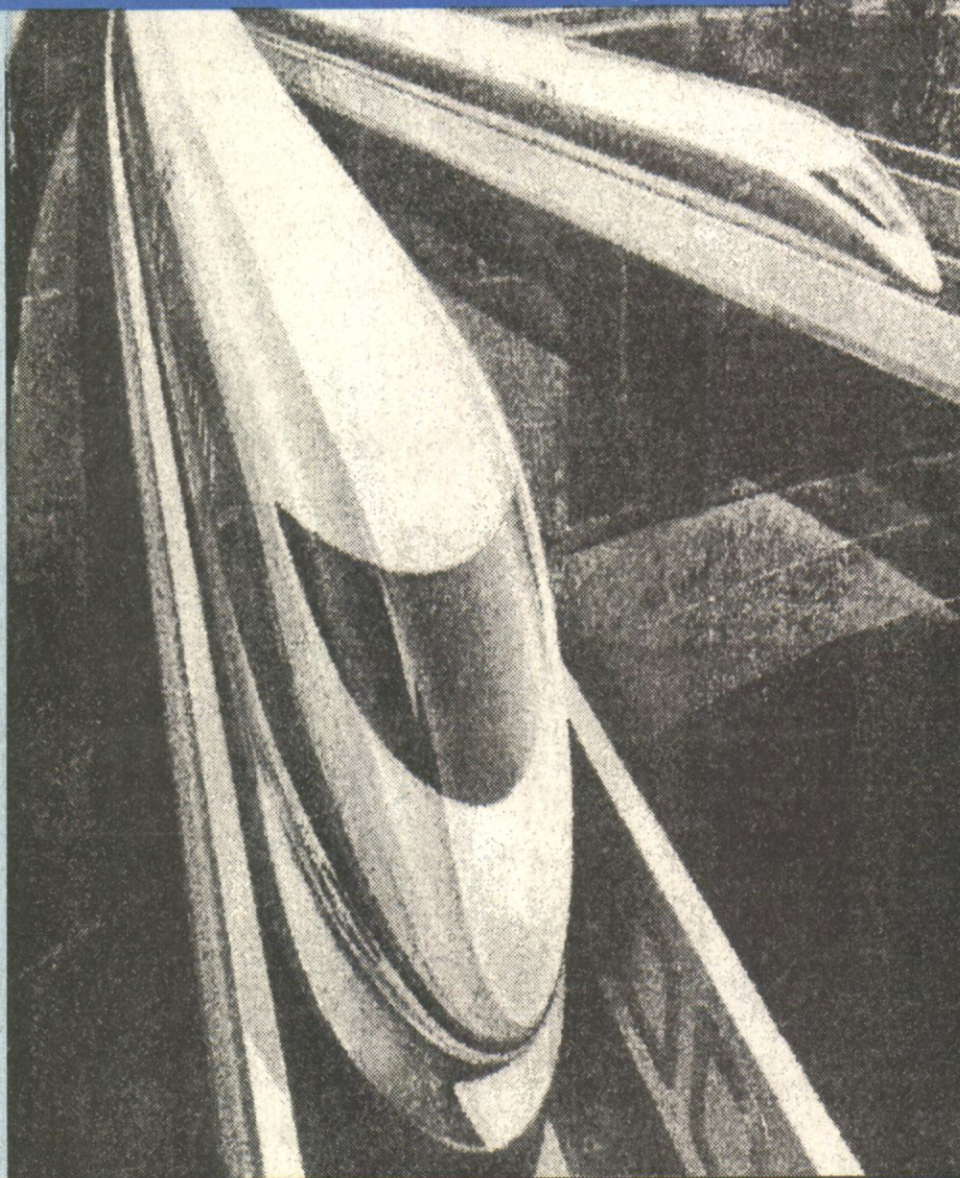
the alternative newsmagazine

FAST TRAINS **ON A SLOW TRACK**

*Despite
Clinton
initiatives,
the U.S. is
lagging
behind on
high-speed
rail.*

By David Moberg

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EDITORIAL

CLINTON'S PASSION COMES HOME TO ROOST

In announcing the appointment of Ronald Reagan's former director of communications to the same post in his own administration, Bill Clinton declared that David Gergen's job would be to "improve our ability to communicate what we believe." This was necessary, the president said, because "the passionate concerns of this administration are not always the things ... being communicated to the American people." In turn, Gergen averred that Clinton "wants to be an innovative centrist president, to reach out in much the same way as when he was governor of Arkansas." But, if memory serves, Clinton's only passion in Little Rock was his passionate ambition to become president.

In pursuit of that goal—as he demonstrated in his campaign—Clinton could, indeed, be both passionate and tenacious. Since then, however, he has shown only the tentativeness, hesitancy and irresolution of a person dedicated to no principle other than his own advancement.

Strange, then, that the media has increasingly painted Clinton as tilting to the left. And stranger still that some on the left have had the same perception. In fact, to us, the striking thing about the Clinton administration, so far, has been its utter failure to break with any but the most marginal policies of the Reagan-Bush years.

True, Clinton has taken progressive stances on social issues, and he has broadened the social base of presidential appointments. But while his administration looks different from the outside, the power relationships within it are strikingly similar to those of the past. Corporate interests predominate—and prevail. Token concessions are made to popular and left groups, but the interests of their constituents are ignored. Thus, for example, many African-Americans have been appointed to high office, but the problems of the inner cities have been addressed with a striking absence of passion. In fact, after a feeble and grossly inadequate proposal for summer jobs was shot down by Republicans in the Senate, the issue disappeared from Clinton's agenda.

Similarly, the president boldly announced that he intended to change the armed forces policy in regard to

gays. But as commander-in-chief he ignored the insubordinate activities of his secretary of defense and the joint chiefs of staff, who opposed him on this issue. And now he seems ready to settle for less than half a loaf. Furthermore, whether Clinton intended it or not, the effect of his initiative on behalf of gays has given him a progressive aura that masks his total subservience to the military-industrial complex.

Thus, after campaigning for a permanent ban on nuclear testing, the administration recently announced its intention to proceed with a new series of tests—a course that would set off a round of similar tests by other nuclear powers and give tacit encouragement to still other countries now developing their

own atomic weapons. And, of course, Clinton has dropped his campaign promise to use cuts in military spending to create jobs for a peacetime economy. Instead, preferring to protect arms manufacturers' profits, he has proposed only the slightest cuts in military spending. And he has justified this with the Reaganite excuse that arms spending is needed to preserve jobs.

None of this is surprising to those of us on the left who knew Clinton's record as governor of Arkansas. The surprise, or, more accurately, the disappointment is that the organizations of the balkanized left still focus on their narrow immediate interests and ignore the class loyalties of the administration. Top leaders of the labor movement, for example, are more interested in deals with the administration to get striker replacement legislation through Congress than they are in the needs of working people to win a universal health care system shorn of insurance company inefficiency and profit. And environmental groups tend to focus on the protection of endangered species while corporate America proceeds apace with the degradation of the urban and suburban environments where the vast majority of working Americans live.

These are the strategies of supplicants, groups that accept the current distribution of power in our society and seek only to wrest concessions from the existing structure. Thus, like the various narrow corporate interests that seek special privileges through lobbying and campaign financing, the organizations that, in toto, represent the overwhelming majority of society have been reduced to "special interests." And since these groups cannot match the money available to corporate lobbyists and campaign donors, this majority, relegated to second-class status, can be ignored by Clinton at little or no risk.

But we live in a democracy. In theory, the majority, not money, rules. And the task of the left, now as always, is to find ways to unite this majority, to identify its needs and interests and represent them coherently. Only if we could succeed in doing this would Clinton become a partisan of the left.

IN THESE TIMES

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© Lionel Dellevigne

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LETTERS

Whitewashing fanaticism

The editorial on David Koresh and the FBI (*ITT*, May 17) was very good. But David Futrelle, in his column "Branch Apocalypse" in the same issue, came uncomfortably close to right-winger Walter Williams in leniency to Koresh and his followers. Williams went so far as to compare the Davidians to the heroic defenders of the Warsaw Ghetto. Futrelle did not get that absurd, instead resting his case on religious tolerance.

Futrelle's problem comes from his statement, "There is no objective way to distinguish 'good' religion from 'bad'..." A sampling of objective crite-

ria will be offered here. Just about anyone will agree that "Thou shall not murder" is good religion. However, people who believe in biblical inerrancy are silent when it comes to capital punishment or plots to kill Saddam Hussein and other foreign leaders.

So here are a few criteria: Does a religion practice what it preaches? Does a religion justify violence? A good religion teaches that means and ends must be in harmony—good ends cannot be achieved through evil means. The "Golden Rule" may be found in some form in every major religion. All these criteria are interrelated. They reject hypocrisy and show respect for other human beings. When it is thought that a supposed good may be achieved by any means

necessary, we have fanaticism.

We also note that "bad" religion is more common than "good," which brings us to the realization that David Koresh is only an extreme example of the commonplace distortion of religion we see in today's world. Futrelle is right about one thing: we have to be careful about labeling someone else's religion as "eccentric" and fostering a witch-hunt atmosphere. While respect for our tradition of religious freedom is called for, it is well within the journalist's province to function as a sort of "consumer advocate" and expose the hypocrites as well as those who rip off their followers' minds and pocket-books.

Elihu Edelson
Tyler, Texas

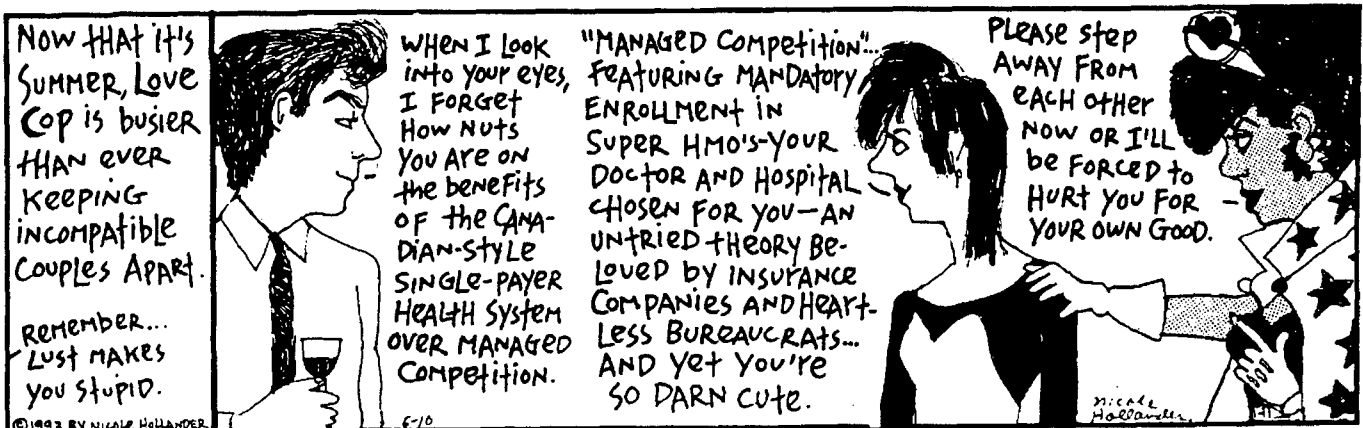
They asked for it

Judging from the interpretation of events made in your FBI/Koresh editorial and the commentary by David Futrelle (*ITT*, May 17), one might conclude that law enforcement authorities reacted entirely out of proportion to a minor indiscretion and thereby criminalized the practice of mere religious difference. This, however, is precisely the tortured reasoning employed by Henry Hyde and Bob Dole to excuse Iran/contra and vilify Lawrence Walsh.

What *ITT* and the Republicans have both chosen to ignore is that a crime is a crime, whether or not there exists some alleged well-meaning

SYLVIA

by Nicole Hollander



"patriotic" or "divinely inspired" motivation. The Constitution, not the Bible, is the premier legal authority for our democracy. And shooting at cops cannot be cavalierly disregarded as a little faux pas. Plus, the murder/suicide and self-immolation at Waco were hardly the FBI's doing: this was a unilateral course of action undertaken by members of the cult.

Futrelle implies that the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms/FBI would have acted differently had Episcopalians resisted, with identical force of arms, a similar attempted arrest. This strawman hypothesis has no basis beyond mere speculation. And Futrelle's impassioned argument for cultural pluralism in defense of the Koresh cult's behavior could equally be made in defense of the poor misunderstood Mafia or those beleaguered religious souls in the Ku Klux Klan, but it would also be equally devoid of relevance. Armed and illegal confrontation is not a valid attribute of cultural identity.

Fundamentalist zealots, religious and political, regardless of whatever meaning they may be searching for in life, have been resolute in exempting themselves from the standards of measure by which they insist everyone else must be judged. This is exactly why they are described as zealots.

But, more fundamentally important, there is rather a profound difference between a government authority enforcing laws and a government authority violating laws. Your comparison of the Waco catastrophe to the invasions of Grenada and Panama, which were undertaken in cynical disregard of the law, constitutes a non sequitur. In Philadelphia and in Waco, it was the escalated armed resistance to legitimate law enforcement that necessitated escalated enforcement measures. The resulting tragedies, whatever tactical mistakes may or may not have been made by enforcement authorities, were all the direct consequence of armed militancy dedicated to self-proclaimed exemption from the rule of law.

Koresh and MOVE and Jim Jones

were no different in their criminal misconduct, except in terms of contextual specifics, than armed ghetto or drug-cartel gangsters, or contra-resupply operatives, or military death-squad battalions. Unless you think you can make a valid argument in favor of civil war, you simply cannot, with any intellectual credibility, hold legitimate law enforcement authorities responsible for consequences attendant to the armed and criminal actions of fanatical ideologues who repudiate law and the primacy of the Constitution.

Brian Zick
Los Angeles

Editor's note: Brian Zick misses the point of our editorial. We did not defend Koresh but merely suggested that the ATF could easily have arrested him without a full-scale attack, intended as a publicity stunt. It was the overkill, cavalierly designed to present a macho image and in total disregard of the human suffering it might cause, that appalled us. We see a clear analogy between this and both the bombing of the MOVE house in Philadelphia and the invasion of Grenada. Not only was there no justification for the level of force used to attain the stated goals (in Philadelphia, to evict MOVE; in Grenada, to protect American medical students), but there was also an arrogance of power that is entirely antithetical to human rights. This problem is endemic in American life, as the recent killing of Yoshihiro Hattori and the acquittal of his killer in Baton Rouge makes clear. Confronted with the menace of a 16-year-old boy in his carport, Rodney Peairs rushed to the door, yelled "Freeze" and then shot him through the heart with his .44. And countless neighbors, interviewed on TV, have all said that Peairs did the right thing, because he only wanted to protect his family.

David Futrelle replies: It was not Henry Hyde or Bob Dole but Rosa Luxemburg who wrote that "freedom is always and exclusively freedom for one who thinks differently." What disturbed me about the public response to

the tragedy in Waco, and what disturbs me about Zick's letter, is the rush to judgment—the willingness to believe (without proof) any villainy attributed to Koresh and his followers, coupled with the willingness to defend any and all of the actions of "legitimate law enforcement authorities" against even the mildest of criticisms.

Shoot the lawyers

Regarding the "ghetto defense" for murder in Francis Flaherty's "The ghetto made me do it" (ITT, April 5): Why didn't Flaherty interview the family of the girl murdered by Felicia Morgan and ask them if living in a ghetto is an adequate excuse for taking the life of their child? And what is the opinion of the six girls who Felicia Morgan robbed at gunpoint of their personal possessions, jewelry, shoes and coat? Are ghetto lives now to be considered worthless and ghetto residents to be deprived of justice because lawyers have found a new way to advance their profession? If ghetto dwellers were to heed the words of that durable bumper-sticker slogan, "First We'll Shoot All the Lawyers," you can bet we would hear no more about the ghetto defense.

Steve Max
New York

Slim pickings

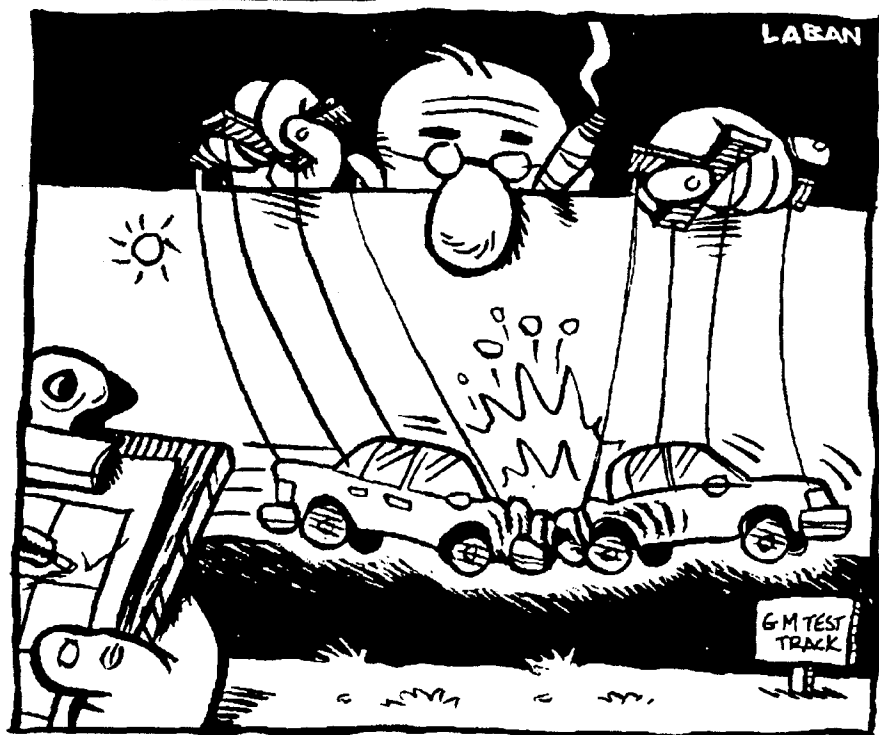
Thank you for David Moberg's article about Jim Hightower and his foray into talk radio (ITT, May 17). I'll start listening for his progressive voice on the airwaves, if I can find it. If not, I'll bug WBEZ-Chicago until they carry him.

I'll also continue to listen, occasionally, to Rush Limbaugh because, although I completely disagree with him, I am not one to eschew the fat.

Jeff Balch
Chicago

For more information about the programming, write to Jim Hightower at P.O. Box 13516, Austin, Texas, 78711.

InSHORT



THEY'RE NO DUMMIES

General Motors knows a lot about rigged test crashes

General Motors went to great lengths to portray itself as the victim of an infamous "rigged" *Dateline NBC* story. In an otherwise accurate report on the dangers of outside-the-frame fuel tanks in GM pickup trucks, NBC failed to disclose that it used incendiary devices to ensure a GM truck would burst into flames during a staged collision. A GM suit about the broadcast resulted in an on-air apology by *Dateline NBC* anchors Stone Phillips and Jane Pauley, as well as the resignation of NBC News head Michael Gartner and the firings of three *Dateline NBC* producers.

The grim irony is that GM has been rigging *its own* crash tests for more than a decade. And the giant automaker presented its doctored tests as evidence in courts of law—not simply as a made-for-TV visual aid.

"Being accused of test-rigging by GM is like being called ugly by a frog. GM virtually invented the rigged-for-litigation crash test. They are certainly

General Motors went to great lengths to portray itself as the victim of an infamous "rigged" *Dateline NBC* story. In an otherwise accurate report on the dangers of outside-the-frame fuel tanks in GM pickup trucks, NBC failed to



By Woody Igou

Life follows art?

A raft of books depicting the crimes of ousted Prime Minister

ter Fernando

Collor have

become best

sellers in Brazil.

The most popular, by Collor's

former press secretary, is entitled "A Thousand Days of Solitude."

A sign of the times—compressed Magic Realism.



Icon abuse

The *Fortean Times* reports that a person in Sandusky, Ohio, has been serially preying on Barbie dolls and thus far has

attacked 24

dolls with a

knife. The publi-

cation also

printed the fol-

lowing adver-

tisement from a woman in

California: "I channel Barbie,

archetypal feminine plastic

essence who embodies the

stereotypical wisdom of the

'60s and '70s. Since childhood

I have been gifted with an

intensely personal, growth-

oriented relationship with

Barbie. " She charges \$3 to

answer questions via Barbie.

Oh, well, Hello Dali.



Amnesty by amnesia

El Salvador's leading conservative newspapers frothed at the mouth over the United Nation's Truth Com-



mission Report holding the Salvadoran military responsible for the majority of killings in the

civil war. Headlines read: "Attention Salvadoran people: The Truth Commission wants to destroy the army!" and "Enough foreign intervention!" *Mission accomplished, eh Elliott Abrams?*

Second Amendment liberties?

A Louisiana jury found the defendant not guilty in the fatal shooting of a Japanese exchange student after hear-



ing the following from the defendant's attorney: "You have the absolute legal

right in this country to answer your door with a gun, in your house, if you want to do it. You have the legal right to answer everybody that comes to your door with a gun."

Manners lesson: In the East they kowtow, in the Wild West, we klap-pow!

Stunned by a stupid statement?
Nauseated by a noxious news item?
Ivied about a ludicrous lie? Contact the Appall-O-Meter, In These Times, 2640 N. Milwaukee Ave., Chicago, IL 60647.

APPALL-O-METER SCALE

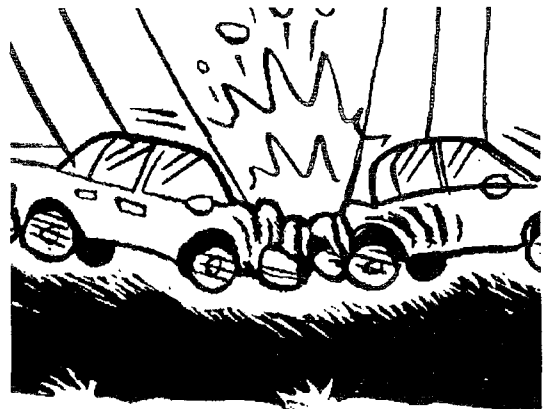
1. Weightless banality
2. Green Acres stupid
3. Malicious cretinism
4. Howard Sternesque
5. Mary Malin mean
6. Gangrenous venality
7. A touch of evil
8. A cancer in the Zeitgeist
9. Et tu, Pol Pot?
10. Horseperson of the Apocalypse

the acknowledged masters of that peculiar art form," argues Atlanta attorney Jim Butler. Just days before GM filed suit against NBC in February, a Georgia jury awarded Butler's clients a \$105 million damage award against GM in an exploding-gas-tank case.

In a successful 1983 suit against GM in California, lawyers for the automaker sprung a test-crash film on the plaintiff's attorneys with no warning in the middle of trial. The film showed a staged accident involving the same circumstances as the one at issue in the trial—but instead of using a GM pickup, the defense team substituted a Ford truck. The Ford pickup—which had an in-frame gas tank instead of the controversial GM side-saddle model—also exploded in the crash.

GM's argument was that the violence of the impact was so great *no* gas-tank design could have prevented a fire.

But when presenting the film to the court, defense attorneys did not mention GM engineers had doctored the car that struck the Ford truck to greatly increase the odds of explosion. This fact only came out on cross-examination of one of the GM engineers. The jury, as it turned out, was not persuaded by the tampered test: it handed down an award in excess of \$4 million.



Joe McCray, the lawyer who discovered GM's doctored evidence in the 1983 case by carefully examining the crash film, won another verdict against the automaker 1990. In this case, the defense again substituted a Ford pickup for a GM truck to demonstrate that the controversial GM gas tank did not trigger the explosion. The gas tank of the Ford was punctured by a long bolt used on the bracketing around the tank. But, according to McCray, a post-manufacture service bulletin from Ford had instructed that this bolt be replaced. And had the bolt been replaced as required, there would have been no puncture. McCray is convinced that GM deliberately selected a vehicle in which the long bolt had not been replaced to increase the odds of a fuel tank puncture.

By the time of the recent trial in Atlanta, GM had made great technical advances in test-rigging, according to Jim Butler, the plaintiff's attorney. "The rigging had become so sophisticated, it was nearly (but not quite) impossible to detect," Butler wrote in a letter to editors of the *Washington Post*.

In the Georgia case, defense attorneys argued that the way in which a dummy driver responded in a GM test crash proved that the side-saddle gas tanks were not to blame for a teenager's death. But when the plaintiff's attorneys sought to inspect the dummy, they discovered that GM had already substantially reconditioned it for re-use, according to *Inside Edition*. And, amazingly, GM could not produce a single photograph taken at the time of the test crash.

The controversy over the fuel tanks continues. The stakes are high for GM, since a recall could cost as much as \$300 million, by the company's estimate. GM has resisted the federal government's request for a voluntary recall and continues to posture, mouthing platitudes about the "search for truth."

—Susan Kimmelman

SAVE MORE WITH LESS

*The pros of the
Clinton energy tax*

Those industry howls about the Clinton administration's energy tax are the sounds of big business barking loudly but with no bite. Two recent reports from the Institute for Local Self-Reliance (ILSR), a Washington think tank, conclude that most businesses—as well as individuals—could easily and cheaply reduce their energy consumption to offset the tax. If a few simple energy-saving measures were adopted, energy consumers would pay no more than they do now, the government would get its needed tax revenue and, in most cases, there would be added benefits, from reducing environmental harm to increasing productive efficiency.

The energy tax, approved by the House but still under assault in the Senate, would affect different energy sources differently but on average would raise fuel prices about 6 percent over three years.

Strategies vary from one business to another, but the potential for savings is everywhere. Office building managers could reduce their total energy use by an average of 6 percent simply by cutting energy for lighting by a little more than one-fifth, ILSR reported. Under one Environmental Protection Agency study, lighting energy was cut by one-half to four-fifths after building owners invested in new lighting technology. They were able to recoup their costs in three years or less.

Farmers, on the other hand, could offset the tax by switching to more efficient tillage techniques (methods of preparing the soil for planting).

Many manufacturers of basic industrial materials could beat the tax by using more recycled materials. Aluminum producers, who use lots of electricity, could avoid any net rise in expenses from the tax by increasing the proportion of scrap in their mix from 31 to 40 percent, ILSR reported. Glassmakers, for example, currently use about 30 percent recycled materials as they melt ingredients for new products. If they increased recycled content to 50 percent, as many manufacturers already have, they could save 5 percent of energy costs, about enough to pay the BTU tax. Steel and paper manufacturers could achieve similar energy savings by increasing recycled content. And there's an environmental bonus because waste disposal problems and exploitation of virgin materials would be reduced.

—David Moberg

THE NEW CRIMINAL CLASS

*Corporate crime is
on the rise*

In a Justice Department report released last month, six out of ten district attorneys in large jurisdictions say that corporate crime is on the rise. And some local prosecutors fault the federal government for not doing enough about it.

Local district attorneys are often no match for huge corporations, which have well-financed and heavily staffed legal departments. Many of these prosecutors want more help and better coordination efforts from the federal government, according to the study. They are also frustrated that instead of referring smaller-scale cases to state and local prosecutors, the Justice Department often simply allows them to go unprosecuted.

The study, "Local Prosecutors and Corporate Crime," shows that the

MEDIA BEAT

By Pat Aufderheide

Government works

Ever since the Federal Communications Commission sent the signal that it means to enforce the Children's Television Act of 1990, educational children's shows have been popping up all over. CBS has found a weekly spot for the wonderfully offbeat science series *Beakman's World*, starring socially conscious comedian Paul Zaloom. And Universal Cartoon Studios, hoping to do well while doing good, is contemplating a cartoon series about dinosaurs, based on Steven Spielberg's megabudgeted summer movie *Jurassic Park*. (The cartoon series is just the tip of the iceberg in the *Jurassic Park* cross-marketing campaign, which has more than 100 licensors behind it.) *Beakman's World* and the *Jurassic Park* series are just two examples from a long list of similar programs vying for airtime. The industry is abuzz with numerous other deals in the making. And to think that only yesterday broadcasters were saying that the market wouldn't bear more educational shows.

Read all about it

If it's front-page news, then it's not by, about or for women—if a study for the Women, Men and Media Project at the University of Southern California and New York University is any guide. The analysis of 20 U.S. dailies showed that on the front page, men were sources 85 percent of the time and bylined 66 per-

cent of the time. The study also showed that men write 74 percent of newspapers' opinion pieces.

Elder TV

The movies and television have regularly slighted the stories of older people. But as the baby boom (with its spending power) ages, traditional TV may be paying more respect to elders. The National Media Owl Awards, given by the Retirement Research Foundation this past May, honored both network and independently produced television programs for addressing issues important to older people. The honorees included Roseanne, Northern Exposure and the public television series P.O.V. for an episode entitled, "For Better or Worse." But while television is learning to look at the lives of older people, film isn't. Hollywood, said Foundation president Joe Parkin, "continues to ignore older actors and actresses and issues affecting seniors."

Future TV

Meanwhile, at the edges television continues to mutate in the direction of home shopping. Following the rise of infomercials—prohibited until Reagan-era deregulation—comes the infomercial genre. Two new entries: Sports Snapshot and Preview Vacation Bargains. Sports Snapshot uses a trivia game-show format to entice viewers to buy sports cards and memorabilia (the merchandiser and the broadcaster split the profits). Preview lets viewers pick a vacation package over the air.

© 1993 Pat Aufderheide

increase in white-collar lawbreaking is especially pronounced in the areas of environmental crime and consumer fraud.

—Miles Harvey

THE COLD WAR'S LAST SKIRMISH

The Christian Anti-Communism Crusade takes ITT to task

It's nice to be noticed. A story in the May 15 issue of the Christian Anti-Communism Crusade newsletter comments on Fred Weir's March 22 *In These Times* report on the Russian "kitchen counterrevolution." The

Crusaders, who devote their time to collecting and disseminating "up-to-date, documented information about Communism and other forces which seek to demoralize the United States," are apparently more pleased than *In These Times* is about Boris Yeltsin's plan to send Russian women back into the home.

"According to the U.S. socialist magazine *In These Times*, the women of Russia are threatened with a fate worse than death," the Crusaders sarcastically report. "They are to be denied the privilege of working in the searing heat or bitter cold at such fulfilling jobs as digging ditches and mining coal, and are to be compelled to waste their time by caring for their babies, beautifying their homes and themselves and preparing nourishing meals for their families. ... Think how horrible it must be for women ... to be compelled to submit to such hardships as reading books, enjoying music and teaching their children." And eating, one presumes, a lot of bon-bons.

For information on the Crusade, or to get your free copy of Fred Schwartz' book *You Can Trust the Communists (To Be Communists)*, write to Christian Anti-Communism Crusade, P.O. Box 890, Long Beach, CA 90801. For information on how to get in on the good life by becoming a Russian woman, contact the nearest Russian Embassy—and a professional surgeon, if necessary.

—David Futrelle

ROUGH CUTS

By JA Reid

A Random Encounter



I N P E R S O N



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GOD'S SIDE

Michael Pfleger fights the war at home

Pfleger looks younger than his 43 years—a tall man with the kind of blond good looks one expects to see on the big screen rather than behind a pulpit. And his is no ordinary pulpit, with its ebony carvings, Ashanti foot stools and kinte cloths. Banners of red, black and green, the colors of African liberation, hang from the rafters. Looming over it all is a 20-foot mural of a black Jesus.

"Victory does belong to us," he says. Pfleger has racked up an impressive number of successes in his 11 and a half years as pastor of St. Sabina, located in a black neighborhood on Chicago's southwest side. His crusades target businesses that exploit African-American communities by selling and advertising tobacco, alcohol, drugs and drug paraphernalia. When he has to, he makes his point with civil disobedience—marching, sitting in, painting over billboards. He's been arrested, but with the help of his parishioners' courthouse prayer vigils and sympathetic juries, no charges have ever stuck.

Although Pfleger's immediate family has been consistently supportive, other relatives have just as consistently excluded him. "In most families, if you're a minister or a priest, you do the baptisms, you do the funerals," he says. "I never get invited to anything."

Pfleger describes the St. Sabina community as "my home." "It's my family. It's where I love to be and where I want to be." Yet, he adds, "I'm white. It's not like I changed my race. A white person in the black community is always a student, because you can never assume to know people as well as they know themselves."

But it's in the white community that he feels most like an outsider. "The

You have to envy a man with such unshakeable faith. "My faith is my foundation," the Rev. Michael Pfleger says. "I never wonder about losing, because goodness wins over evil. I don't ever doubt that."

E T C.

By Miles Harvey

Managed media

Thanks to the mainstream media, the health care "debate" in this country is turning into one long insurance industry monologue. So far, the insurance lobby has purchased \$4 million in ads for a health reform package that would leave the industry in charge of the system.

As *In These Times* reported in its April 19 edition, however, one national grass-roots group has been trying to counter the industry's propaganda blitz. San Francisco-based Neighbor-to-Neighbor has produced a slick TV ad promoting a Canadian-style, government-run system. The theme of the ad is "America's health insurance companies: It's time for them to go."

But a funny thing happened on the way to the transmission tower. When Neighbor-to-Neighbor attempted to buy air-time for the ads in Boston, four television stations—including three network affiliates—refused to air them. The same thing happened at three network affiliates in San Francisco. Only KGTV, the ABC affiliate in San Diego, immediately agreed to run the 30-second spot. Another San Diego station, KNSD, reversed its decision not to run the ad—but only after the blackout became public. The reason for the blackout? Officially, many of the stations argue that the claims made in the ad lack factual substantiation. At issue is the ad's assertion that if insurance companies were eliminated from the system, all Americans could be covered for the same amount of money currently spent on U.S. health coverage.

That statistic, however, comes

from no less controversial a source than the U.S. government. So the "substantiation" argument is incredibly silly—as is some stations' claim that the Neighbor-to-Neighbor spot is "confusing." If viewers are confused by the concept of a single-payer system, it's probably because they haven't heard about it on the TV news. The real motivation for the blackout appears to be simple, cynical and seedy—as Neighbor-to-Neighbor organizer Greg Jobin-Leeds learned when he tried to convince WHDH, a CBS affiliate in Boston, to run the ad. According to Jobin-Leeds, a station executive declared: "Many of our major advertisers are health insurers. We don't want to take any hits from the health insurance companies."

A better ban

As *In These Times* went to press, the Clinton administration still hadn't submitted a congressionally mandated Comprehensive Test Ban (CTB) proposal. The ban would be aimed at halting nuclear testing worldwide no later than 1996. But there appears to be some good news on the ban. The administration is apparently scrapping plans for a watered-down CTB that would outlaw only those tests releasing more than one kiloton of energy. (See "Etc.," May 17.) Administration officials recently told an international gathering of pro-CTB organizations that the one-kiloton limit was no longer under consideration, according to Daryl Kimball of Physicians for Social Responsibility. The pro-CTB forces are now pressuring the administration to continue its current moratorium on nuclear testing and to initiate international CTB talks immediately.

black community never made me make a choice, but the white community did." The choice wasn't hard. After his ordination, says Pfleger, white friends from the seminary bid him goodbye. "They said, 'If we're going to meet, it'll have to be our place, because we're not driving down there.' And I said, 'Fine. Then we'll never see each other again.' And we didn't."

Pfleger's commitment to his community has made him enemies. As threats have come and gone, bodyguards have been assigned to him. There have been middle-of-the-night phone calls, slashed tires, a brick through a window. After a recent campaign that resulted in the revocation of liquor licenses at five neighborhood stores that were selling to minors, the chorus of intimidation began anew. The most serious threats, he says, come from corporate sources—the billboard, alcohol and tobacco industries. "Not just, 'you need to cool down,' but 'back off or you're dead.' You know who it's from—they don't give you a name and address, but you always know who it's from in terms of how they identify themselves."

Only once has he been physically attacked, a few years ago at a busy mall in the middle of a Saturday afternoon. "Three white guys called me nigger lover and jumped me and beat me up," he says. People walked by, watching silently.

Pfleger points out that the real reason Sodom and Gomorrah were destroyed was not because so many in the city were corrupt, but because so few were good. Today, he says, there are plenty of good people, but they have given up, buried their heads in the sand. "The church," he says, "has buried its head in the sand." He contends that churches—not just the Catholic Church but all organized institutions of religion—have failed in their mission to provide spiritual sustenance.

Pfleger's pursuit of truth, justice and spiritual well-being for his flock has brought him into conflict with forces on both ends of the political spectrum. The American Civil Liberties Union was horrified when St. Sabina School became the first elementary school in the nation to institute random drug testing. This year, drug testing stopped. Pfleger says there is no drug problem in the school because of a spiritual atmosphere that has fostered peer pressure to say no.

Pfleger acknowledges that he used marijuana when he was in college, in the late '60s. But he says he's always opposed legalization, due to his personal experience with the drug. "I don't feel anybody should ever be out of control of who they are," he says. And while he's strenuously and successfully opposed the marketing of alcohol to the black underclass, he does drink. "I'm not a prohibitionist," he says. "But we're a society of excess, and we've got to crack that."

Pfleger's most recent crusade is a boycott of the local TV news programs of Chicago's CBS affiliate, WBBM, which he has singled out as the most egregious offender among all media nay-sayers. In Pfleger's view, the station preaches a daily sensationalist sermon of bad news that unjustly portrays African-Americans as criminally inclined. The campaign has not received the press coverage Pfleger is used to getting, yet viewer ratings for the station's news programming have slipped by half. The station and Pfleger have reached an agreement and reforms will be announced soon.

For Pfleger, victory for the forces of good is no distant reward. "I really think we're at a time when we're going to see the change come around," he says. "We're going to see some major turnaround. It's happening. I think it's upon us."

—Susan Kimmelman

T H E F I R S T S T O N E

A GOOD FIGHT

By Joel Bleifuss

Lani Guinier, the president's nominee for assistant attorney general for civil rights, has become, as one of her former colleagues put it, "a convenient lightning rod for politically charged attacks against Clinton." In fact, as *In These Times* went to press, President Clinton was reportedly caving in under pressure to withdraw Guinier's nomination.

Guinier battled through the Reagan years as a litigator for the NAACP's Legal Defense Fund. During the Carter administration, she worked for the assistant attorney general for civil rights. Currently, she teaches law at the University of Pennsylvania. A personal friend of Bill and Hillary Clinton, Guinier nonetheless sued then Gov. Clinton's Arkansas on behalf of African-Americans disenfranchised by Jim Crow laws in one delta county.

Racialist politics has become a cornerstone of Republican electoral strategy. Partisans on the right are attempting to recast Guinier as Bill Clinton's Willie Horton. Bluntly, their message is: let this radical nigger loose on the American electoral system and bye-bye democracy.

In a May 20 press release, Sen. Robert Dole (R-KS) thundered, "I find it hard to believe that a 'new Democrat' like President Clinton would have nominated Ms. Guinier if he had known about her 'far left' views."

Rep. Dave McCurdy, the Oklahoma Dixiecrat, told the *Washington Post*, "Majority rule is what this country was built on. This is not South Africa." (Really? McCurdy seems to forget that 200 years ago the United States was "built on" a system in which only white male property owners could vote.)

The nastiness is palpable. Sen. Alan Simpson (R-WY) is readying himself for Guinier's appearance before the Judiciary Committee. "She is going to go through some kind of anguish," Simpson promised.

Wall Street Journal columnist Paul Gigot describes Guinier as a "bedfellow" of "slavery's most renowned

defender," John C. Calhoun. *Detroit News* columnist and former Bush speechwriter Tony Snow explains that Guinier "advocates an old kind of despotism." And *Washington Post* columnist Lally Weymouth, daughter of media mogul Katharine Graham, writes that Guinier "intends to abolish one of the cornerstones of American democracy—majority rule."

More inexplicable—and dismaying—is how quickly these attacks have been validated by moderate voices. The *Wall Street Journal* can be expected to exploit "Welfare Queen" stereotypes about black women when discussing "Clinton's Quota Queen." But *Newsweek* did it too, with the headline, "Crowning a 'Quota Queen'?"

Sen. Joseph Biden (D-DE), the obsequious chair of the Senate Judiciary Committee, says Guinier's writings on the subject of democracy cause him "great concern." He wants to know if her scholarly work was just an "academic exercise." Parroting Guinier's critics, Biden put it this way: "If she came here and said, 'Participatory democracy does not work. I believe that it should not work. I believe that we have to change the system,' she should go home."

Guinier has never said nor written any such thing. But reading the press coverage of her nomination, one would not know that. What is it about Guinier that has everyone in such a snit? Guinier, an integrationist, has put forward a prescription for our ailing, racially divided society—participatory democracy. To accomplish this revitalization, Guinier advocates exploring the virtues of proportional representation (PR).

Under PR electoral systems, candidates for legislative bodies run in multi-member districts. (See "The First Stone," Oct. 23, 1991.) Such systems allow diverse political views to gain representation more easily. The only Western democracies that do not elect their legislatures through some system of PR are the U.S., Canada, Great Britain, Australia and New Zealand (the latter of which is in the process of switching to a form of PR).

In the September/October 1992 issue of the *Boston Review*, Guinier explored the issue of PR in a long essay, "Second Proms and Second Primaries: The Limits of Majority Rule."

Guinier wrote, in part: "The argument for the majority principle connects it with the value of reciprocity: you cooperate when you lose in part because members of the current majority will cooperate when you win, and they lose."

"But when a prejudiced majority excludes, refuses to inform itself about, or even seeks to thwart the preferences of the minority, then majority rule loses its link with the ideal of reciprocity and so its moral authority. ... Under con-

ditions of sharp racial division, majority rule can serve as an instrument to suppress a minority."

Guinier says it is time that we change the way we think about democracy. "We need an alternative to majoritarianism: a 'principle of proportionality' that transcends winner-take-all majority rule and better accommodates the values of self-government, fairness, deliberation, compromise and consensus that lie at the heart of the democratic ideal," she writes. Guinier favors a form of proportional representation called cumulative voting—the process used by many corporations to elect their board of directors.

Guinier concludes her essay this way: "Representation and participation based on principles of proportionality are an attempt to reconceptualize the ideal of political equality, and so the ideal of democracy itself. The aim of that reconstruction should be to re-orient our political imagination away from the chimera of achieving a physically integrated legislature in a color-blind society and toward a clearer vision of a fair and just society. ... For, in the end, democracy is not about rule by the powerful—even a powerful majority—nor is it about arbitrarily separating groups to create separate majorities in order to increase their share. Instead, the ideal of democracy promises a fair discussion among self-defined equals about how to achieve our common aspirations. To redeem that promise, we need to put the idea of proportionality at the center of our conception of representation."

Clearly, such ideas make many elected officials, Democrats and Republicans alike, very nervous—especially those whose tenure in office would be threatened by a more open political system. Guinier herself acknowledges that a system of proportional representation "arguably weakens the two-party system."

But Guinier is also being criticized for not being properly deferential to the preceding two Republican administrations. Guinier has said that Clinton needs to clean out the Justice Department "with a pitchfork, not a broom." Who should know better? Guinier spent a good part of her legal career trying to clean up the barnyard of the Reagan and Bush Justice Departments, which had been fouled by the likes of Assistant Attorney General for Civil Rights William Bradford Reynolds. In a February 1988 "Memorandum for Heads of Department Components," Bradford spelled out the administration's approach to black-white relations. "We must polarize the debate," he wrote. "We must not seek 'consensus,' we must confront."

Guinier has firsthand experience with such tactics. In 1985, she defended voting rights activists in rural Alabama counties. They had been charged with voter fraud for trying to register and get absentee ballots to housebound black voters.

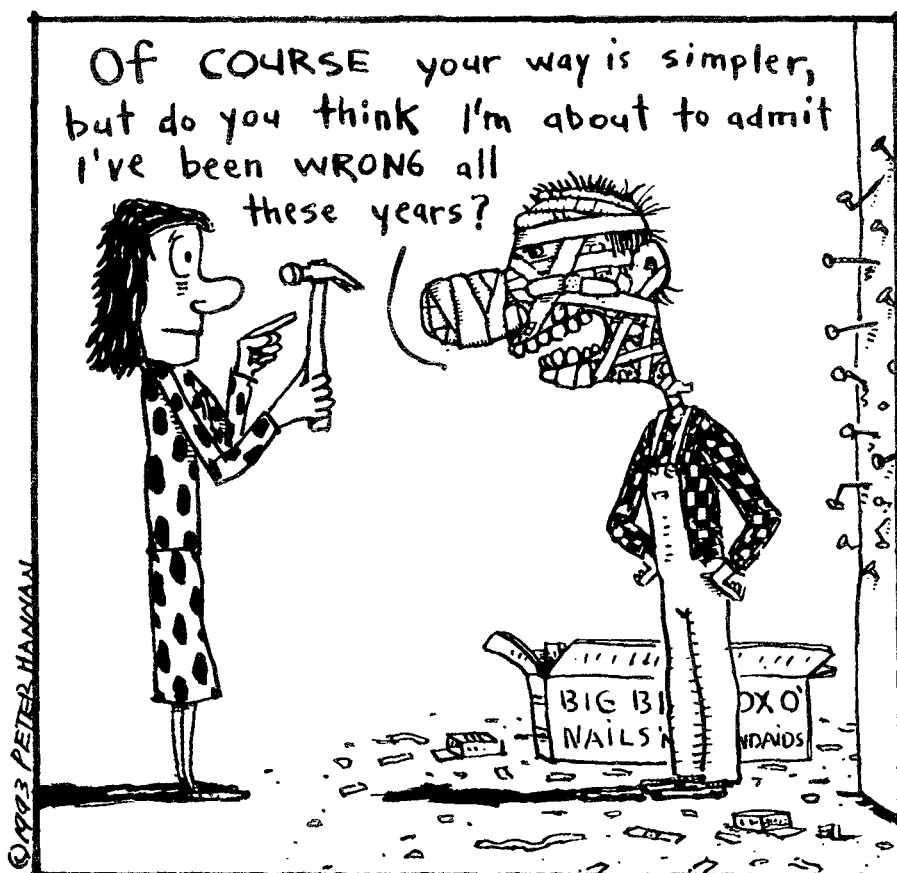
Dayna Cunningham of the NAACP Legal Defense Fund worked with Guinier on that case. "This woman is a real hero," Cunningham told me. "If anyone is qualified to take this job, it is this woman who was driving down the dusty roads of Alabama talking to people who were scared to death. She would stand outside in their front yards coaxing people out of their homes. That is who I want as assistant attorney general, somebody who can talk a petrified witness into coming to court when they risk serious reprisal."

A federal appeals judge overturned one of the Alabama convictions, citing testimony that an unnamed Reagan Justice Department official had said the government's prosecution of the activists was part of a "new policy ... brought on by 'arrogance on the part of blacks in these counties.'"

Guinier has the arrogance to suggest that American democracy has not worked as it should. For this she shines as the most inspiring nominee yet put forward by the Clinton White House—a nominee worthy of a good fight. ◀

THE ADVENTURES OF A HUGE MOUTH

by Peter Hannan



TRANSPORTATION

Late to the station

B

y the turn of the millennium, Japan expects to begin construction on a second-generation high-speed train system. Depending on the results of tests now underway, the Japanese government will choose one of two technological options. It may decide to upgrade the steel-wheel-on-steel-rail technology used in Japan's nearly 30-year-old 130 mile-per-hour bullet train. Or it may opt for a new "maglev" technology—a concept that eliminates old-fashioned wheels and track in favor of powerful superconducting magnets that suspend the train above a guideway and propel it at 300 miles per hour.

Also around the year 2000, the major cities of Europe will be increasingly linked by 200 mile-per-hour steel-wheel trains of principally French and German manufacture. Other important routes will be improved to accommodate trains at

125 miles per hour or more. If the German government gives its approval later this year, construction may also start in 1994 on a \$5 billion maglev line that would link Hamburg and Berlin using Germany's well-tested Transrapid technology. A trip that now takes three hours by modern train would zip by in only 55 minutes on the Transrapid.

By contrast, in the United States there may be a few corridors in densely populated regions that have been improved enough to run European-designed trains at 125 miles per hour by the year 2000. If all goes well, there will also be a U.S. maglev prototype ready to begin testing. In the unlikely event that any high-speed steel-wheel trains are deployed by then, the technology will almost certainly be European or, at best, the product of a joint venture with U.S. companies.

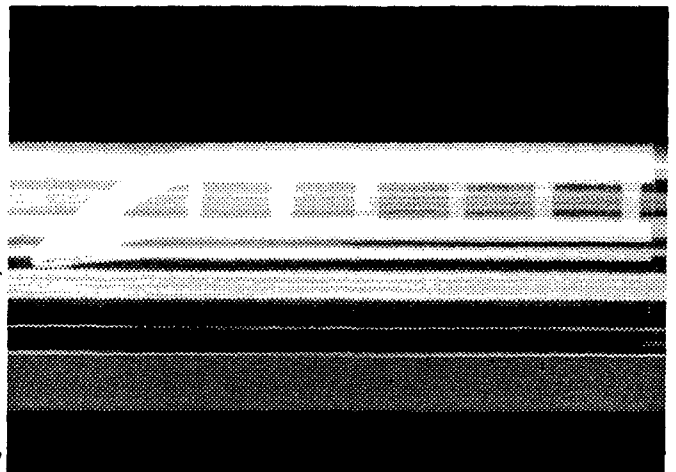
Yet even this anemic U.S. performance will be possible only because the Clinton administration is seeking a hefty increase in high-speed train funding. The administration proposes spending \$1.3 billion over five years

on high-speed trains, including \$300 million on technology development. That includes \$228 million over five years for maglev research. The administration also plans to continue separate funding of improvements on the Amtrak line from Boston to Washington that will permit running higher speed trains. In addition, President Clinton is seeking a change in tax law to enable states to issue tax-free revenue bonds to finance rail projects.

George Bush had proposed no funds for any passenger trains—including Amtrak—and froze even some of the more modest high-speed rail spending approved by Congress in 1991. Clinton's high-speed train proposal reflects the best of his campaign promises—economic stimulus through public investment that will strengthen the economy for the long run. Yet even Clinton's projected spending will leave the United States lagging far behind other industrial

Despite new Clinton initiatives, the United States is moving too slowly on high-speed rail.

By David Moberg



Argonne National Laboratory Photo

countries. Meanwhile, America's rail gap will continue to hurt the country on many fronts—jobs, trade, economic efficiency, public convenience, safety, energy efficiency, the environment and even foreign policy.

Trains have been a missing link in the transportation infrastructure of the United States, the victim of private mismanagement and unsupportive, even hostile, public policy. Even so, rail freight has made a small comeback, especially with "piggyback" trains hauling truck trailers. Amtrak has also made vast improvements, though it still isn't a match for even the most backwater European trains. Because we've slipped so far, however, there is far less of a built-in constituency for trains—except for a dwindling club of train buffs—than there is for cars, trucks and planes. Yet even in such auto shrines as Southern California, modestly modernized rail has proven popular.

Contemporary high-speed trains make sense. They can carry travelers over distances of several hundred miles as quickly as planes, based on overall travel time, thus offering an alternative to gridlocked highways and airports. They require roughly one-third the energy per passenger mile of autos and about one-fourth to one-sixth the fuel of airplanes.

Japan's and Europe's more efficient transportation systems help these U.S. economic rivals produce goods with about half of the energy that this country does, giving their businesses a competitive edge. Electrified trains do not rely on oil and could free the United States from its dangerous and costly reliance on the Mideast, which skews U.S. foreign and military policy. The energy advantage of trains yields an environmental reward, despite the pollution and radiation waste disposal problems of power plants for electrified trains. And if photovoltaics and wind generators were used, trains might prove an environmental bonanza.

Trains use far less space than highways or even airports and operate more quietly than airplanes (although they still pose noise problems at high speeds). They are the safest form of transportation: after billions of passenger miles on high-speed trains in France and Japan, there have been only two fatalities—and those occurred when the French TGV

(*train a grande vitesse*) was nearing a station at a low speed. Trains also encourage denser urban settlement, which is more efficient and less environmentally destructive than auto-induced sprawl.

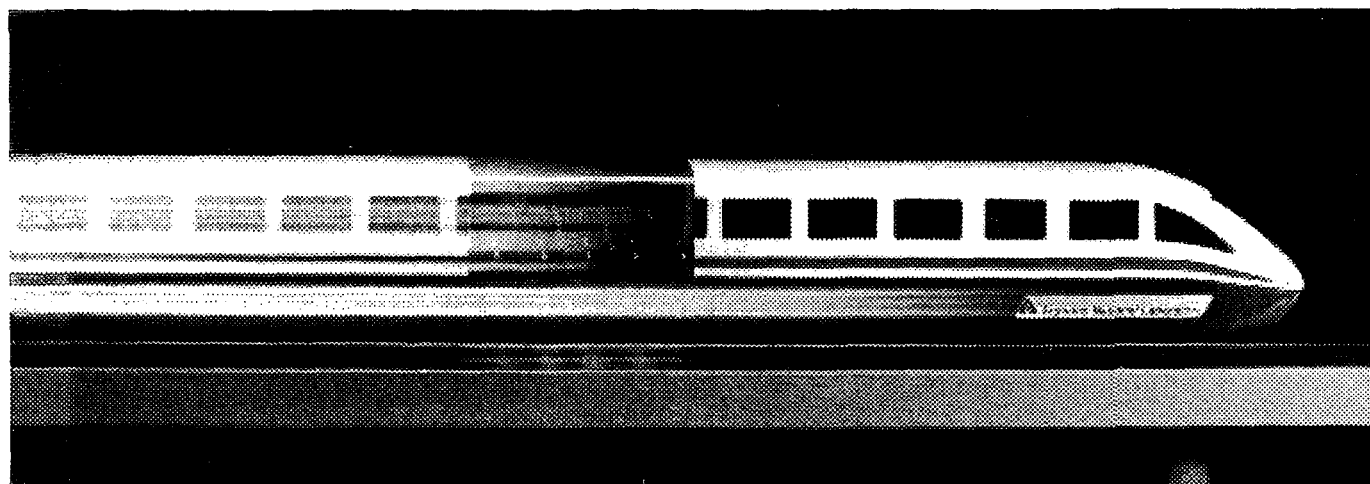
The existing U.S. transportation system is less and less effective even at moving people at reasonable speeds. Highway gridlock wastes more than 3 billion hours each year for commuters, truck drivers and travelers. By 2005, we'll be wasting 12 billion hours. Figuring that a person's time is worth, say, \$10 an hour, the cost is staggering.

Delays at airports are also costly. Larry Johnson, director of the Center for Transportation Research at Argonne National Laboratory near Chicago, calculates that passengers lose more than 12 million hours each year in delays at O'Hare airport alone. In 1986, according to the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), airline delays cost \$5 billion, including \$2 billion in extra fuel and labor costs for the ailing airline industry.

Building new highways and airports is often unpopular, and such construction creates as many new problems as it solves by contributing to urban sprawl and further lengthening commuting time. It's also costly. Relieving airport congestion will cost \$117 billion over the next decade, according to the FAA. Maintaining the interstate highway system could run \$3 trillion over the next several decades.

High-speed railroads could relieve many of these problems, but the biggest obstacle is financing. Building a new rail system requires a long-term strategic outlook that government must provide—either as a major investor and guarantor or as the outright owner and operator.

At first glance constructing a new train system seems very expensive. Yet comparison of the costs of different transportation modes is complicated. Although railroads were heavily subsidized in the 19th century, government policies have favored highways and airports at the expense of rail for more than 50 years. Highway and airport trust funds receive fuel and airport taxes, but for many years railroad taxes went not for rail improvements but for general federal programs. There are also direct subsidies to highways (about 40 percent of total costs) and air travel (more than



half the cost of the FAA). Defense spending subsidizes pilot training and aircraft development.

Environmental, safety and other costs of trucks, cars and airplanes are also not adequately accounted for in the prices people pay for tickets, fuel or cars. For example, World-watch Institute, an environmental research group, calculated that every auto receives a subsidy of about \$2,400 a year. Thus car and air travel seem cheaper than they would be with a full accounting of costs.

It's clear that money must be spent on transportation simply to accommodate growing demand, not to mention the need for cheaper, faster, safer or more environmentally sensitive forms of travel.

So how should it be spent? Argonne's Larry Johnson argues that maglev, for example, could compete in cost and time with most flights of up to 600 miles. That represents more than 40 percent of the flights at an airport like O'Hare. Maglev could save \$1.5 billion a year by relieving just one-third of airport congestion, Johnson estimates. If it were possible to capture that savings to finance maglev, the country could build 2,000 miles of maglev over 20 years. If savings in energy and health care (from eliminating higher safety and environmental illness costs of current transportation) were calculated, the new system would more than pay for itself. Also, building high-speed rail lines, which require far less maintenance than highways, would reduce expenditures that would otherwise have to be made for highways and airports.

Unfortunately, the world of finance doesn't operate on the basis of a social rationality that comes from looking at the big picture. That's especially true since federal policy—even under Clinton's proposals—insists that new high-speed rail must be primarily privately financed, even though other transportation infrastructure has been mainly funded through taxes. European and Japanese high-speed trains have been quite profitable and employ some private financing. Nonetheless, public authorities play a lead role as financier, guarantor and planner.

What would a modern U.S. rail system look like? Roughly four-fifths of the cost of any system is the infrastructure—land for right-of-ways and construction of the rails or guideways. Much of the federal rail money spent over the next five years will upgrade six or more corridors (including a California system and a Chicago-centered Midwest network). The goal is to accommodate slightly higher speed trains by eliminating dangerous highway crossings and improving track and control systems.

At present, there is growing enthusiasm among policy-makers for the X2000 train built by the Swedish-Swiss firm Asea Brown Boveri, which has a factory in New York. It is designed to maximize speed for existing track layouts by handling turns better than trains currently in use. Its top speed is 130 to 150 miles per hour.

But existing track will not work for steel-wheel trains that travel at very high speeds. The new European and Japanese steel-wheel trains—expected to travel around 200

miles per hour—require completely new, very straight, segregated, electrified rail lines, thus raising the cost significantly. Several states—including Texas, California, Florida and Ohio—have seriously considered launching their own high-speed rail systems but have tripped up over financing questions, airline opposition or regional obstacles.

Any new system will have to provide links to city centers as well as major airports. To best maximize revenue, a high-speed system might not only offer passenger service, but also carry valuable freight—such as overnight express packages—or even passengers' cars.

Building a new rail system requires a long-term strategic outlook that only government can provide.

Some transportation experts believe the real future of high-speed rail is not with steel-wheel technology but with maglev. Maglev is a controversial alternative not yet in commercial operation anywhere in the world. An idea of American inventors—first from rocket pioneer Robert Goddard in 1909, then from Brookhaven National Laboratory scientists in the '60s—maglev research was funded by the federal government until 1975. Germany and Japan have since invested about \$1 billion each in developing their maglev prototypes.

Maglev relies on powerful magnets. Using the force of magnetic repulsion or attraction (depending on the system), a maglev train "floats" a few centimeters to a few inches above its guideway, thus eliminating all friction except air drag. The suspension magnets can be embedded in the floor of the guideway or, as maglev research increasingly favors, in the sides of the guideways. The train and guideway also constitute a giant stretched-out electric motor that moves the train forward rather than turning a motor shaft around rapidly.

The German Transrapid uses huge conventional electromagnets to lift trains through the force of attraction. The Japanese—who have developed both a high-speed maglev based on repulsion and a commuter-speed model based on magnetic attraction—use superconducting magnets that must be cooled by liquid helium and nitrogen. Although they are lighter in weight and stronger than conventional magnets, there are problems with greater electromagnetic radiation and reliability of the magnets. The German train has a much smaller gap between the train and guideway, raising questions about construction tolerances required and maintenance. At this point, the Germans claim to be five to ten years ahead of the Japanese in development of a commercially viable maglev.

Since 1990, four consortia of corporations and universities have been developing different U.S. models of maglev under the National Maglev Initiative, which will soon issue

its final report recommending that the United States go ahead with further development and narrowing of options. All of the U.S. maglev concepts employ superconducting magnets; three of the four use electromagnetic repulsion. At a recent international maglev conference at Argonne, U.S. Army researcher James Lever argued that the four U.S. proposals promised higher performance than the Transrapid or the French TGV at comparable cost.

There are still technical issues to be resolved, especially with the new U.S. concepts. No prototypes have been built or tested yet. But the issue of cost still emerges immediately in most discussions.

At this point maglev seems likely to be more expensive than high-speed steel-wheel rail. Typical ballpark figures suggest an average of \$10 million to \$15 million a mile for high-speed trains, \$20 million to \$30 million a mile for maglev. Maglev proponents claim they could build a system for under \$20 million a mile. Costs could be reduced dramatically if maglev could use interstate highway right-of-ways. Most maglev designs assume that tracks would be elevated, but money could be saved if the guideways could operate at ground level for long stretches in rural areas. Most urban expressways cost in this same \$20 million to \$30 million range (or even more), but average overall highway costs are lower.

John Harding, research director for the Federal Railway Administration, says that at these prices maglev could pay its full operating and construction costs in the San Diego-Los Angeles-San Francisco corridor and in the Northeast, from Washington to Boston. In several other densely populated areas, maglev could pay full operating costs out of fares but probably not all construction costs, Harding says.

Steel-wheel advocates argue their technology is now ready to go and has proven that it can reach speeds on test runs of over 300 miles per hour. Maglev advocates argue that their systems start at 300 miles per hour and represent the inevitable triumph of electronic over mechanical systems. They doubt steel-wheel technology is viable at the highest experimental test speeds. Yet maglev's higher speeds may offer only insignificant time savings for short- and medium-range travelers. For example, on a 50-mile trip, improving speeds from 50 miles per hour to 150 miles per hour cuts a one hour ride to 20 minutes. But jumping from 150 miles per hour to 300 miles per hour only reduces that already short 20-minute trip to 10 minutes.

Although maglev has often been presented as more energy efficient than rail, research presented at the Argonne conference suggested maglev may be more energy intensive—but not enough to make a big difference at current energy

prices. Both are far more efficient than planes, but steel-wheel technology may run into problems of maintenance and reliability at the upper range of its speed.

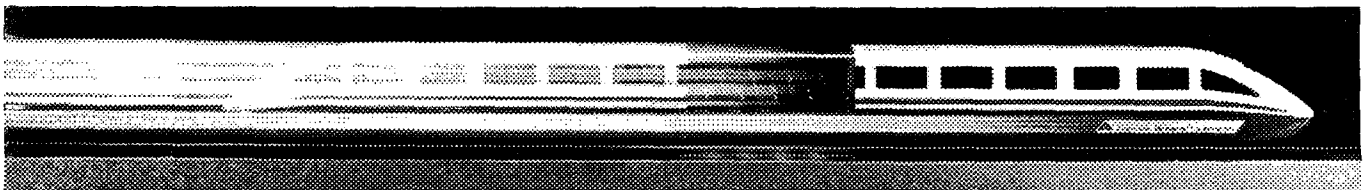
Maglev appeals to strategists who see it as an opportunity for U.S. corporations—possibly including converted defense suppliers—to leapfrog to a new generation of transportation technology and overcome the nation's neglect of rail over the past 50 years. There is only one U.S.-owned company with a limited capacity now to make passenger locomotives (Morrison Knudsen) and two weakened freight locomotive manufacturers (General Electric and General Motors). Two foreign-owned firms have locomotive factories in the U.S.

With steel-wheel technology, American producers may be locked into an inferior position, relying on technological leadership from overseas. Hard bargaining could move some production jobs here or encourage joint ventures, however. Clinton's program provides some help for non-electric high-speed locomotive development as well as maglev in the hope that U.S. firms can carve out a new niche. It will be a tricky balancing act for government to mesh industrial strategy and transportation objectives without letting either policy distort the other.

Much of the rail infrastructure work is now being left to private investors, who are notoriously skittish about such long-range commitments. Consequently, many rail advocates think the federal government should assume primary responsibility for the track infrastructure. This would be accomplished not through tax revenue, but by issuing bonds to raise private funds. There could be competition for operation of the trains, with Amtrak as one likely contender. But the same competitive model that governs airlines or trucking firms is likely to work even less well on railroads. That's especially true for maglev, since the choice of a guideway design will essentially determine the train design as well.

The national transportation strategy must balance immediate incremental improvements in conventional rail with efforts to develop new technology, both steel wheel and maglev. The nation can't wait for maglev breakthroughs, for example, nor can it rely solely on gradual modernization.

Some skeptics doubt whether government has the will or ability to pull off such a massive mission—comparable to the interstate highway program started under Eisenhower or the space program under Kennedy. A new high-speed ground transportation system will be costly. Yet there are less obvious costs of delay—inefficiency and damage to human health and the environment. Without strong government leadership, the nation will pay a hidden price it can't afford. ◀



T R A N S P O R T A T I O N

Flying through turbulence

O

ver the last three years the nation's airline industry has resembled a demolition derby. Suicidal fare wars sparked by desperate carriers trying to coax recession-weary travelers back onto planes bashed profits. Skyrocketing costs, including high wages paid to pilots, and overambitious growth plans drove losses up further.

All told, the industry has lost \$10 billion since 1989. The destruction wreaked by such steep losses is everywhere evident. Three of the nation's 12 largest carriers have gone out of business. Three others spent most of the last 48 months grounded in the bankruptcy courts. And the madness continues: during the first quarter of 1993 the nation's airlines lost another \$1 billion.

So it's no wonder that the Clinton administration formed a commission to figure out whether the federal government can help the industry. With unemploy-

ment proving an especially stubborn problem, the White House worries that a continued bloodletting in the airline industry will only further swell the jobless ranks. The industry has already shed 100,000 jobs, including employees laid off by aircraft manufacturers like Boeing Corp., as the nation's carriers cancel multibillion-dollar plane orders. Moreover, the federal government fears U.S. carriers may soon be too weak to fend off strong foreign competitors unless the industry's financial losses end soon.

What's the government to do? Well, very little, actually. Most of the industry's wounds are self-inflicted, and federal government action can do almost nothing but exacerbate the bleeding. If the Clinton administration takes action before the industry moves to heal itself, it will only preserve a money-losing structure that consumers will end up paying for through higher fares. In the worst of all worlds, taxpayers would end up footing the bill through a direct subsidy to the airlines,

just as they do in Europe and the Far East.

But the administration's newly formed Commission to Ensure a Strong Competitive Airline Industry is likely to hear lots of contradictory opinions. Already dozens of politicians and the industry's leading labor unions, including the Air Line Pilots Association and the International Association of Machinists (IAM), have demanded reregulation. This coalition believes insane pricing has sabotaged profits. So they want the commission to reinvent something akin to the Civil Aviation Board, the agency that regulated fares before deregulation took hold in 1978.

The airlines have other ideas. The industry's Big Three—United, Delta and American—want the 10 percent federal ticket tax rolled back, arguing that it dissuades travel. They also want limits placed on how long a carrier can remain in bankruptcy, since they believe it is the bankrupt airlines that are responsible for most fare wars. Since there's no evidence to support that, the insolvent carriers oppose any revision of the bankruptcy code. Instead, they want the government to turn the ticket tax over to the airlines as a de facto subsidy. And American Airlines chief executive Robert Crandall thinks the federal government should provide loan guarantees for new aircraft purchases, making taxpayers pick up the tab if a carrier defaults.

What's wrong with these options? Reregulation would be a hopeless task. Regulation was relatively easy when carriers simply shuttled passengers from point A to point B, say Cleveland to St. Louis. But these days, with airlines ferrying passengers through highly complex "hub and spoke" systems that funnel the St. Louis-bound traveler through a hub in Chicago first, it's impossible to tally the exact cost of each leg of a flight. Worst yet, the task of calculating fares for thousands of daily departures would require personnel and

What should the Clinton administration do to help the troubled airline industry? Not much.

By Kevin Kelly
CHICAGO

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computer power that would test the means of the cash-strapped federal government.

Consumers would also be big losers. Even though fares this year are higher than last, today's deeply discounted tickets for leisure travelers are well below 1978 levels. And a raft of new low-cost entrants like Reno Air and Kiwi International continue to keep fares affordable on heavily traveled routes. Not to mention the prices charged by no-frills powerhouse Southwest Airlines, whose average fare is four times lower than rivals like United. "What's the government going to do?" asks one industry executive. "Tell Southwest and the others to raise their fares?"

Reregulation could hurt the U.S. overseas, too. Currently, the Department of Transportation is locked in tough negotiations with Europe and Japan, seeking to lift government restrictions on competition. If the U.S. succeeds, American carriers would gain enormous advantages. United, for instance, has a cost structure two to three times lower than its European rivals. If the carrier were allowed to cut fares and expand services in Europe, it would have a huge advantage. But if the U.S. government moves to reregulate at home, foreign governments will feel free to resist any pressure to liberalize their markets.

But worst of all, embracing reregulation overlooks the

fact that only the carriers can solve their problems. Over the last few years the nation's strongest carriers went on an aircraft-buying binge, adding more than 445 aircraft to expand their fleets between 25 percent and 43 percent each. These carriers, mainly United, Delta and American, bet passengers would continue to crowd onto planes, despite an economic downturn. The carriers also believed that, as bankrupt airlines went out of business, they'd take over the abandoned routes.

Moreover, the Big Three expanded their hub-and-spoke route systems beyond all economic sense. While these systems work in big markets like Chicago and Dallas, places that are popular destinations as well as good transfer points, a host of hubs in smaller cities like San Jose, Nashville and Baltimore cost the industry dearly. "Carriers like American thought hubs were great things," says one rival, "so they just expanded and expanded until they got too big."

But the industry's thorniest problem is its labor relations. No matter how steeply airlines cut other expenses, unless they tackle labor costs, they won't stay aloft long. Close to 40 percent of United's revenue is eaten up by salaries and benefits, and that has kept unit costs high. The average pilot, for instance, earns more than \$109,000 annually but works less than 50 hours a month, notes Merrill Lynch

industry analyst Candace Browning. Worse yet, worker productivity has fallen 20 percent since 1989, says Robert Mann, an industry analyst with Simat, Hellisen & Eichner, largely because of the same inefficient work rules that once plagued the auto industry.

These are exactly the kind of basic business problems the government can do nothing about. Instead, it's up to the airlines, and they're beginning to show signs of tackling these problems. During the past year carriers have canceled almost \$40 billion in aircraft orders. That should help bring capacity into balance with demand, and dramatically reduce the likelihood of crazy fare wars like the one last summer, which cost the industry more than \$1 billion. Consumers

wage and benefit concessions. American's Crandall even suggested the carrier would get out of the airline business largely because of expensive labor contracts.

What's missing is the kind of cooperative effort forged by highly successful Southwest Airlines. That carrier's unionized pilots earn an average \$93,000 but work up to 30 percent more than other pilots because of liberalized work rules. More importantly, the carrier's management, led by Chief Executive Herbert Kelleher, has worked at building close ties with labor by involving union leadership in key decisions. Kelleher also eschews the kind of haughty posture taken by Crandall. He doesn't indulge in many perks, and when he flies he talks with employees and even serves drinks to passengers.

Of course, it will take a lot more than such symbolic actions to reverse years of bad labor relations at the nation's big carriers. The Big Three could learn something from ailing carriers like TWA and Northwest, which have won over labor by offering them ownership stakes. No carrier had worse labor relations than TWA. But since employees received 45 percent of the carrier in return for wage concessions, they've become some of the most enthusiastic in the business. TWA pilots make sales calls on travel agents, the flight attendants have paid for ads, and the mechanics put aside work rules recently in order to reconfigure the carrier's aircraft more quickly.

That said, the commission could take some small steps to help the industry. Tax relief is probably in order, since the Clinton fuel tax will hit the carriers hard. It could recommend

releasing the \$7 billion Airport Trust Fund to finance expansion of the nation's most congested airports, namely those in New York, Chicago and Washington. And the commission could urge the Clinton administration to prevent the use of "predatory pricing" by the nation's stronger carriers to chase off scrappy new entrants like Reno Air.

And that's about it. The airline industry's complexity doesn't lend itself to simple solutions. Poor labor relations, for instance, aren't something the government can solve. Instead, hopefully, the commission will take the opportunity to create an intellectual climate that supports change, perhaps by recommending ways management can heal its rift with labor or downsize its operations with minimal dislocation.

That will disappoint those looking for drama. But to build a healthy industry capable of competing globally, it is exactly the kind of government action that's needed. ◀

Kevin Kelly is a frequent contributor to *In These Times*.



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can expect slightly higher fares as a result, economists warn, but certainly not approaching the heights achieved under a regulated system.

More importantly, airlines are beginning to back out of inefficient hubs. American took the lead by cutting service in San Jose. At the same time the carrier inked a deal with low-cost Reno Air to have the smaller carrier feed passengers to America's remaining profitable flights in San Jose. American is also looking at scaling back operations in Nashville and Raleigh/Durham. Similarly, United has downsized operations in Washington, D.C., and held back on some overseas expansion in order to cut losses.

What about labor? So far management has shown no ingenuity there. The major carriers have laid off about 9,000 employees, and United is threatening to spin off its catering business to get rid of 6,000 highly paid IAM-represented employees. Beyond that, the management of the nation's Big Three carriers continues to threaten labor with drastic downsizing measures unless the unions consider

ENVIRONMENT

Invisible hand, green thumb

B

*Market
environmentalism:
it's a good theory,
but will it
work?*

By Will Nixon

Bill Clinton's soundbites are rare, but catchy. When he joined green Democrats such as Al Gore and Tim Wirth in endorsing a new wave of ideas known as market-based environmentalism, he said it was time "to recognize that Adam Smith's invisible hand can have a green thumb." It's an idea whose time has come—at least for the speechwriters.

On the eve of Earth Day this past April, Sen. Max Baucus (D-MT), the new chairman of the Senate Environmental and Public Works Committee, joined the growing chorus before the National Association of Manufacturers, vowing to "end the 'religious wars' between business and the environmental communities ... [and] build 'new partnerships' that promote economic and environmental progress."

The rhetoric flows, but will these ideas work? People on the left have not taken kindly to market-based environmentalism. "I think it's a fad brought about by people who think the Reagan brand of politics will last a century," says Barry Commoner. He wants the government to adopt an environmental industrial policy, such as ordering 55,000 electric cars to jump-start Detroit's mass production of cleaner vehicles.

Barbara Dudley, head of Greenpeace USA, predicts that the national groups may soon split into camps over "the whole question of market solutions to environmental problems. I think that's a stupid way to go. Environmental crises are not going to be solved through the marketplace—if they were, they would have been solved a long time ago."

Greenpeace has even launched its own modest industrial policy, helping a German company develop a refrigerator that's cheaply cooled by propane and butane rather than by the expensive HFC-134a in the works from DuPont.

But most criticisms of market-based environmentalism miss the point. The real issue isn't whether the approach condones free-

market capitalism but whether the U.S. market economy is free enough for such programs to actually work.

Last July, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) issued an overview of "The United States Experience with Economic Incentives to Control Environmental Pollution." Author Alan Carlin found after reviewing more than 40 programs at all levels of government that they work beautifully in economic models, saving gobs of money compared to the old "command and control" style of environmental regulations, but "one recent review of ... emission and effluent trading systems concluded that realized cost savings fall well short of these projections."

The only program to live up to its advance billing was a gasoline "lead phase-down" in the early '80s that let refineries buy and sell lead credits as they moved at different speeds to eliminate all lead by 1986. The EPA later estimated that granting refineries this leeway allowed them to save \$250 million. All the other systems faced "severe regulatory constraints that have raised barriers to trading," Carlin wrote.

The new proving ground is the acid rain emissions trading system set up by the 1990 Clean Air Act amendments. This program, in which pollution credits would be wheeled and dealt on the Chicago Board of Trade just like pork belly futures, takes effect in two stages as coal-burning utilities cut the nation's total emissions of sulfur dioxide by more than half by the year 2000.

The trading system allows those who clean up faster and cheaper to aid the slower utilities by selling them pollution

credits until they make their own improvements. Overall, according to economic models run in 1990, this plan should save \$1 billion compared to the traditional "command and control" system of forcing them all to meet the same standards at once.

The Environmental Defense Fund (EDF) touts the program as a breakthrough that should be applied to problems as large as global warming itself. "A European utility might achieve emission reductions by subsidizing the manufacture of more efficient refrigerators in India or China. Or an American manufacturer having trouble reaching emissions limits could earn the necessary offsets by planting trees on marginal farmland to absorb a greater amount of carbon dioxide," said EDF head Fred Krupp in a talk last summer.

Krupp's group recently wrote President Clinton to propose a trading system for carbon emissions within the U.S. to meet the new national goal of reducing this pollution to 1990 levels by the year 2000.

But the acid rain emissions trading scheme has now run into the same kinds of regulatory barriers that have foiled other programs. In the first stage, the 110 largest polluters, mostly located in the Midwest, must cut their emissions to 2.5 pounds of sulfur dioxide per million British thermal units (BTUs) by 1995. (BTUs are the standard measure of energy output for different fuels.) The second phase adds 2,000 smaller utilities and calls for everyone to slim down to 1.2 pounds of sulfur dioxide per million BTUs by the year 2000.

While these deadlines may seem distant, the big utilities have already filed compliance plans with the EPA, since major changes like installing new smokestack scrubbers,



switching to cleaner fuels or starting energy conservation programs take time and money. And so far, only a handful of trades have been announced, compared with many more plans to simply install new scrubbers—an answer no different from the old "command and control" days.

These large utilities, which work under the heavy hands

of public oversight commissions, haven't shown much appetite for the risky business of wheeling and dealing in emissions futures. And the oversight commissions seem willing to let them install new scrubbers and bill their ratepayers, says Janet Gille, a spokeswoman for the Center for Clean Air Policy (CCAP), a Washington, D.C., advocacy group that promotes the trading system.

In Ohio, the CCAP and the local chapter of the Sierra Club have even taken a utility to court to override the state's commissioners and force the utility into the trading system. The Ohio Power Company has chosen to put an expensive scrubber into one of its dirtiest plants, partly so it can keep burning high-sulfur coal mined by another Ohio subsidiary of its holding company, the American Electric Power Company. As always, the company argues that it wants to save jobs.

The Ohio state regulators approved the scrubber and a rate hike for the customers. But the CCAP and the Sierra Club believe that the utility could save about \$320 million by launching an energy conservation program, burning some low-sulfur coal from the West and buying emission credits.

It seems ironic to find a utility hauled into court to participate in a program created to benefit the utility industry, but Gille admits that the enthusiasm for including the trading program in the 1990 Clean Air Act came more from Washington policy-makers than the industry itself.

The system faces a challenge from another direction in the Adirondacks in upstate New York, where acid rain has killed more than 300 lakes. Here, the top conservation group wants state regulators to steer New York utilities away from selling their permits upwind to dirty coal-burning plants in the Ohio Valley that have caused the region's acid rain.

"Trading is an economist's answer to an environmental problem. But it's only half an answer. It accepts the concerns that utilities have about expenses, but it doesn't ensure that these emissions cuts are meaningful," says John Sheehan, spokesman for the Adirondack Council. "We have to see significant decreases to make any difference. Even taking a million tons of pollutants out of the Midwest won't make a dent."

So far, the trading system hasn't worked in the Adirondacks' favor. A Long Island utility sold 10,000 permits to AMAX Energy Corporation of Indiana, which will now offer the permits, along with its soft, dirty coal, to customers in Illinois and Indiana. At an EPA auction in late March intended to jump-start this program, Illinois Power bought

almost 400,000 permits.

Sheehan fears that the Ohio Valley plants burning the dirtiest coal in the country may be the slowest to clean up under a system that could drag the process out until 2010 before all the reductions are made. So his group and the state's environmental agency want the EPA to establish "deposition standards" to ensure that places like the Adirondacks will be protected no matter what the vagaries of the market may be.

Trading buffs have hardly given up hope. They believe that the second phase of the program, which brings in 2,000 more players, many of whom are smaller utilities that tend to be much more innovative, will bring this market to life.

"The law is not constructed to make trading that easy in the first round," the EDF's Krupp says. "We'll know a lot more in the next 18 to 24 months." Any new power plants will have to buy emissions credits from existing facilities to begin pumping their sulfur dioxide into the sky, so some future trading will be guaranteed.

Joseph Goffman, an attorney for EDF, adds that "even if there are not a significant number of inter-utility trades, there will be a ton of intra-utility trades," which should make the market a success.

Carlton Bartels of the financial firm Cantor, Fitzgerald, which auctions government securities, says that utilities and regulators should become much more active once his firm sets up a trading marketplace that will be less alien to them than the Chicago Board of Trade. What's needed, he says, is a system that makes permits seem more like the long-term energy contracts that the utilities deal with all the time.

Market-based environmentalism means much more than emissions trading, of course, and it may be applied to a myriad of problems besides acid rain. It includes green taxes, ranging from Clinton's proposed energy tax to local fees for garbage pickups, like in Seattle. The deposit system that some states now have for cans and bottles to fight littering could be instated for car batteries, tires and other kinds of garbage.

The EPA is also experimenting with "cash for clunkers" programs that would allow industrial polluters to clean up the air by buying and disposing of Americans' dirty cars in lieu of the polluters installing their own new cleanup equipment.

Sometimes, all it takes is a little public disclosure to clean up the environment. David Roe, a senior attorney with EDF in California, suggests that even toxics problems can be reduced with what he prefers to call incentive-based environmentalism.

The Community Right-to-Know law simply makes industries report the annual emissions of about 330 chemicals to the EPA. They don't have to do anything more, yet the power of public embarrassment has led them to reduce these emissions from 7 billion to 4.8 billion pounds between 1987 and 1990, according to the EPA.

***Trading is an
economist's
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And California's Proposition 65, passed in 1986, simply requires manufacturers to put warning labels on products that contain any of 470 chemicals known to cause cancer or birth defects. "If one company's hair dye sits on the shelf with a cancer warning, and the competitor's is warning-free, it is not hard to predict which bottle most customers will choose," Roe says.

The law hasn't caused a great stir, but that's fine. "Success is not a million warning signs, but zero signs and 1 million people doing things not to put up the signs," Roe adds.

Even these successes have their limits, however. Community Right-to-Know covers only large polluters—and one-third of them still fail to report their data. At the same time, activists want many more chemicals and emitters added to the system. (This past Earth Day, President Clinton did announce that the military, by far the biggest polluter

in the country, would begin reporting.) And Proposition 65 has yet to be duplicated anywhere else. Last fall, corporate groups hired former Surgeon General C. Everett Koop to lead an ad blitz that swamped a similar ballot measure in Ohio.

In the end, the strongest form of market-based environmentalism may be the marketplace itself. Corporations that throw batteries of lawyers up against government regulators also send teams of market researchers out to track consumer behavior. And in countries such as Canada, Germany and Japan, where government labeling programs give a seal of approval to environmentally preferable products, consumers have generally supported green industrial policy right at the checkout counter.

But here in the U.S., the independent Green Seal campaign launched by Denis Hayes soon after his triumphant staging of the largest Earth Day in 1990 has moved at a glacial

pace. The first seal didn't appear on a product until this past March. And so far, judging from the boutique-ishness of most Earth stores and Earth products, American consumers have yet to make the environment more than a shopping fashion. ◀

Will Nixon is associate editor of *E* magazine.

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This glossary defines words only in the context as they appear here in **BOLD**. The symbol **o** indicates an idiomatic phrase.

acabar de o to have just	herido/a nm/f. injured (person)
atentado nm. attack	integrista nm/f. reactionary
calentamiento nm. warming	por unanimidad o
corriente nf. current; flow	unanimously
detuvo (detener) v. arrested	pronunciar un discurso o
	to deliver a speech
	supuesto/a adj. alleged
	surgir v. to appear
	Torres Gemelas o Twin Towers

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B L A C K A M E R I C A

Disharmony

L

eonard Jeffries, the controversial black studies professor at the City College of New York (CCNY) who lost his position after making a 1991 speech widely denounced as anti-Semitic, won a legal victory last month when a jury ruled his right to free speech was violated by the school's board of trustees. Jeffries was awarded \$400,000 and is awaiting a decision on his reinstatement as chairman of the black studies department. The ruling has boosted his status within the burgeoning black neo-nationalist movement and illuminated the link between that movement and anti-Semitism.

Meanwhile, Louis Farrakhan, leader of the Nation of Islam (NOI) and one of the leading icons of the neo-nationalists, has befuddled many of his supporters with a sudden campaign of what some have characterized as "fiddle

diplomacy." The fiery Black Muslim leader, noted for his blistering denunciations of white society's decadence and perfidy, has performed two violin concerts—in Winston-Salem, N.C., on April 17 and in Chicago on May 17—with black classical conductor Michael Morgan. On both occasions, Farrakhan chose to perform the music of Felix Mendelssohn, a 19th-century Jewish composer.

The boost in popularity Jeffries will reap from his judicial victory should stiffen the resolve of his supporters and intensify their opposition to his Jewish critics. This, while Farrakhan, the man many credit with single-handedly generating the current tensions between black Americans and Jews, is making musical gestures of conciliation. These two developments seemingly point to paradoxical trends. But instead, they mark two reactions to the same trend—a rise in anti-Semitism in the black community.

Anti-Jewish sentiments are widespread among black neo-nationalists, especially among those who, like Jeffries, call themselves Afrocentrists. The seeds of this anti-Semitism were planted during the '60s, and they have sprouted full-blown in the '90s to obscure the value—even the necessity—of some Afrocentric ideas.

Jeffries' basic appeal derives from the inherent value of those ideas. He has argued long and eloquently for a more accurate portrayal of Africa's children in Western scholarship and has collaborated with many researchers to help provide that portrayal. But Jeffries represents a growing element in the academic Afrocentrist movement that has settled on biological determinism to explain primary differences in behavior among people.

Here is their basic premise: Europeans are warlike and conquest-oriented because the environmental context of their evolution promoted such behavior; Africans, on the other hand, are cooperative and communalistic because they evolved in the environmental bounty of humanity's cradle. For two decades, as CCNY's black studies chairman, Jeffries nurtured that perspective—among others—in relative obscurity.

But he received his national introduction following a July 1991 speech in Albany, N.Y., in which he said that Jews and Italians had collaborated in Hollywood to project denigrating images of African-Americans and that Jews had helped finance the slave trade. The speech provoked a firestorm of controversy. Many people, including New York Gov. Mario Cuomo and U.S. Sen. Alfonse D'Amato, urged that Jeffries be dismissed from his state-funded post.

The critics prevailed and Jeffries lost his job as department chairman in March 1992. Jeffries contested his dismissal in a lawsuit that proved successful in the May 11 rul-

*While
Farrakhan
fiddles,
black-Jewish
relations
burn.*

By Salim Muwakkil

ing. Already, others of Jeffries' persuasion are asserting their academic prerogatives. The latest is Tony Martin, a professor of black history for 20 years at Wellesley College near Boston. Among the many books Martin assigned to students was *The Secret Relationship Between Blacks and Jews*, a book put out by Farrakhan's NOI that alleges considerable Jewish participation in the slave trade.

Martin was hammered for his syllabus choice. A number of Jewish groups accused him of using the cover of academic freedom to disseminate anti-Semitism. Martin countered that he used the NOI text as one among many to examine the issue of slavery from a variety of perspectives.

Responding to the charges, Martin said, "Anti-Semitism, once presumably the anguished cry of an oppressed people, has become, for the privileged and powerful U.S. Jewish leadership and their unthinking Negro stooges, a bludgeon to subdue dissent, stifle discussion, deprive African-Americans of a living and perpetuate historical lies." Clearly, the issue has become yet another arena of antagonism for the two groups in a dispute that is already dangerously contentious.

Enter Farrakhan and his Mendelssohn concerto. "Ofttimes when we speak, we use words that convey a different perception of meaning based upon our culture and our life experience," Farrakhan wrote in an open letter explaining what seemed to be his sudden interest in the classical music scene. But music is "a universal language accepted by all nations, kindred, and tongues. I desire for us to use the universal language of music to help us to rise above the fray that has been created by the usage of words."

The fray to which Farrakhan refers is the growing animosity between his followers and Jewish groups, particularly the more militant groups, such as the Jewish Defense League. In the past, several extremely dangerous confrontations between the two sides have been narrowly averted, according to sources close to the situation. Farrakhan's security forces have had their hands full maintaining vigilance against the numerous threats from militant Jewish groups, while convincing more volatile NOI members and supporters to refrain from launching action on their own.

The situation has reached such a flash point that Farrakhan has found it necessary to take drastic action. However, the NOI chief is a man whose popularity among black



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admirers is based on his uncompromising, pull-no-punches leadership; his legitimacy as a leader is dependent on fidelity to the racist message of Elijah Muhammad. Farrakhan must walk a fine line between conciliation and what some would call co-optation.

"The man is in a real dilemma," said one observer who meets frequently with the NOI leader and who wishes to remain anonymous. "If he makes any move to modernize or liberalize the Nation, he'll have hundreds of rivals jumping at the bit to call him a hypocrite and a revisionist of Elijah's doctrine. If he doesn't, the Nation will begin showing signs of strain and tension, and that could be dangerous."

In addition to his musical interludes, Farrakhan has gingerly initiated verbal dialogue with Chicago-area Jewish leaders and rabbis, using longtime *Chicago Sun-Times* columnist Irv Kupcinet as a go-between. Kupcinet, who recently dined at Farrakhan's south side Chicago home, said he is convinced of the minister's sincerity and has urged

other Jewish leaders to meet with him. "There still is a lot of suspicion and skepticism in the Jewish community, but I think a lot could be accomplished if we could get everyone to sit down and talk," Kupcinet said.

There is some speculation that Farrakhan has been diagnosed with colon cancer and that intimations of mortality are sparking his quest for rapprochement; he wants to leave a better taste in the mouth of history. And that is indeed a possibility. He admitted in a 1991 speech that doctors found a cancer, but he claimed he prayed it into remission. Perhaps that cancer has returned, but its first appearance may have been enough to trigger epitaphic thoughts.

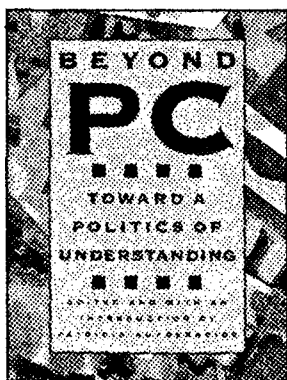
It seems more likely that Farrakhan simply sees the danger in the present course of affairs and feels he must do something. Somewhat surprisingly, the NOI leader's fiddle diplomacy has unleashed a torrent of criticism within the African-American community. A survey conducted on black-owned radio station WVON-AM in Chicago found a large number of listeners who criticized Farrakhan for his conciliatory gestures. The same attitude greeted Jesse Jackson in July 1992 when he returned from addressing the World Jewish Congress in Brussels. Conciliation is equated with selling out in black America in the '90s, and "sell-out" is a major epithet.

One reason why Leonard Jeffries pulls such crowds for his lectures at CCNY every Monday, Wednesday and Friday is his uncompromising refusal to bow to the dictates of the school's Jewish leadership. His legal triumph will bolster that image and his supporters will boast that he's no sell-out. ◀

BEYOND PC:

Toward a politics of understanding

Edited and with an introduction by
Patricia Aufderheide, Senior Editor, ITT

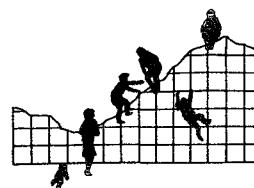


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EDUCATION

The elephant in the classroom

By Foyne Mahaffey

"Pease works!" our school secretary reminds us as part of her telephone-answering routine. Based on the events of the past few weeks, however, it seems ridiculously naive.

This morning's paper reported the stabbing of a substitute teacher by a nine-year-old with a pair of scissors, two teachers in *our* elementary school had been physically assaulted by students (one bitten and kicked; the other punched), and the usual array of daily violent acts (hitting, kicking, shoving and tormenting) seems to be on an upward spiral. In this context, suggesting that "peace works" sounds more sarcastic than sincere.

As a society, we are struggling to deal with issues of violence. We all confront violence at times, but it feels like such a different thing in schools. Elementary schools in particular are such intimate places. They are places for nurturing and mothering as much as they are for formal learning. Maybe that's why the violence hits so hard here. Perpetrators of violence in schools are not outsiders—they are our kids.

Witnessing daily episodes of violent behavior upsets more than teachers' psyches. We are obligated as teachers to run to violence rather than

away from it. That's not natural. Although this is a learned response to most of us, attending to violent acts is a large, uncomfortable part of the teaching reality. Outbursts are frequent and severe. We see it from kindergarten on. What are schools doing about it? What are school systems doing about it? What are families doing about it? What are the disrupters having to do about it?

We let the elephant in our classrooms, and now we can't get it out. Did it sneak past us years ago without our noticing? Have we been walking around it, under it, or climbing over it so carefully, because dealing with it seemed a lower priority than music? Well, it's got our attention now.

Some teachers don't even notice the violence around them, because to notice means getting involved in a hopeless situation.

Five years ago, I noticed that teacher convention topics began shifting from curriculum matters to coping skills. The sessions had cute names and suggested strategies like redirecting, signing contracts, and group establishment of consequences for inappropriate behaviors. As the years moved along, session names became a little more serious and so did the topics—from "coping skills" to "survival skills." Now, issues like "Legal Rights of Teachers," "Sex Harassment in Schools," "Dealing with Violent Students" and "Gang Signs and Symbols" get more convention attention than ever.

Intolerance of violence is being voiced more and more in teacher meetings, union candidate rhetoric and virtually anyplace teachers gather and talk. There is severe frustration and burnout caused in large part by the constant drain of student aggression and violence. The teachers' union is pushing efforts to remove "chronic disrupters" from schools and put them in alternative sites. With full knowledge that removing the sight of violence won't end it, educators are still rallying around this last resort. Some of us are willing to admit that we don't have the energy or the resources to deal with it anymore.

We have relied on peace studies curricula, human relations departments, self-esteem units, peer mediation and "feel good" programs for help, but, frankly, we're not noticing enough of an effect on the target population. The elephant remains. We tiptoe around it like an explosive.

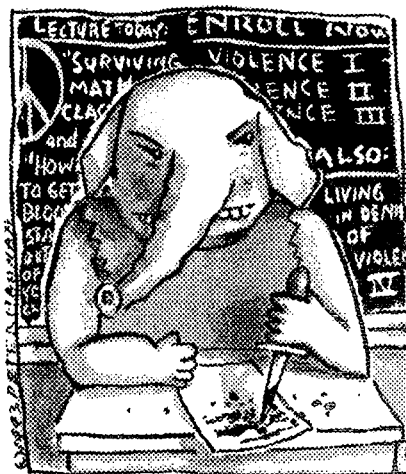
It is obvious that the school systems aren't capable of taking it on. There is no money for staffing, teacher training, special offices or special programs. Social programs cost money, and many larger urban school systems are broke. Los Angeles teachers are taking a 10 percent pay cut, New York has cut 1,000 positions, Chicago and Philadelphia are facing athletic pro-

gram cuts, and the Milwaukee system, where I teach, has to cut \$66 million from this year's budget. Where's it going to come from? Snip. There went our human relations department.

A publication for employees of Milwaukee public schools came out just before that staffing cut was revealed. But a "Youth Summit on Violence" is being planned. This is, admittedly, a direct result of a shooting outside a middle school and the increasing number of weapons cases in schools this year. Schools are being asked to develop a method for students to voice their concerns and possible solutions to violence. It will make a nice poster. Which students will go? The ones causing the trouble? And who's going to plan it, run it, follow up on proposals? Not the human relations department. My guess is that it will be someone who already has way too many responsibilities as it is, and no additional budget.

Individual schools have neither the time nor the personnel to respond adequately to each violent act, even though that's all that some assistant principals do now. By completely, I mean servicing not only the abuser but the abused. I watch the non-violent children and wonder what effect this environment must be having on them. Our kids witness violence every day. They hear it, they watch it, they avoid it, they receive it. What is happening to them? What is happening to the kids who are sitting and waiting? Now, instead of suspending a child for hitting, we might ask, "Did he hit you really *hard*?" "Was it a punch or just a slap?" This sounds ludicrous, but it's happening.

From some teachers' points of view, it's not even worth noticing violent language or behavior, because if you notice it you'll have to get involved in it. That means time and emotional investment. That means you have to approach the students who are abusers and attempt to calm them, attempt to seek assistance while your class is left unattended or stands and waits for you, try to avert a scene, explain what happened to



administrators and parents, and—if you have any time left—try to show some compassion to the abused.

I would like to give sensitive and comprehensive attention to both parties involved, but the reality is, I can't. It happens too often. The problem is deeper. There are unmanageable numbers of children severely affected by abusive homes, addicted parents, or just plain ignorance. Most of my friends' classrooms have one or two extreme behavior cases (i.e., a child who has deep emotional challenges) whom they must work with and around all year long. This is in addition to the two or three other chronically disruptive students, and one or two just plain disrupters.

Throughout our school system we have to expect and we have to demand

non-violence. We have to make these expectations clear to families, students and staff members and find ways to accept no less. This may mean alternate sites, it may mean lower class sizes, it may mean more security. What it definitely will mean is staffs united in their understandings of what is acceptable behavior, united in their tolerance levels and united in their commitments to take on the violent. We can't afford to wait around for help from bankrupt school boards and central offices. We're on our own.

No matter what, we cannot lower our standards for children—not academically, not behaviorally. They are connected. If we give up on them, we may as well hang the white flag out of the teachers' lounge window today—that is, if we can still get around the elephant.

Foyne Mahaffey is a teacher at Thirty-Eighth Street Elementary School in Milwaukee.

This article is part of a continuing series on education edited by Alex Molnar, a professor of education at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. The series, "Notes from the Back of the Class," covers a wide range of education-related issues. Contributions from readers are welcome. Manuscripts of no more than 1,000 words should be sent to Alex Molnar, c/o In These Times, 2040 N. Milwaukee Ave., Chicago, IL 60647.



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I N T H E A R T S

Personal memory and public meaning

P.O.V. has gradually established itself as a showcase for less politically explicit, more personal work.

By Pat Aufderheide

S

ix years into its run, P.O.V.—the public TV documentary series that opens its new season June 15—has come up with another unpredictable, sometimes maddening and sometimes delightful collection of American voices.

Established as a refuge from the bland balance and huffy objectivity that characterize public television, a site where the challenging and the idiosyncratic would reveal the sociopolitical complexity of the nation, the series is now a seasoned veteran of controversy. Two years ago, for instance, Marlon Riggs' video poem on African-American homosexuality, *Tongues Untied*, wound public television station managers and distributor Public Broadcasting Service into knots, as religious conservatives attacked it and stations agonized over whether to run it.

Although longtime left video activist Marc Weiss built P.O.V. from a base of socially conscious, issue-driven documentaries, it has gradually established itself as a showcase for less politically explicit, more personal work.

This year, under the able leadership of Ellen Schneider (Weiss is taking a much-needed sabbatical), P.O.V. is back with more evidence that highly personal film and video work can also make a provocative social statement.

The series launches on June 15 (but check your local stations) with *Silverlake Life: The View from Here*. The much-acclaimed independent film was begun by documentary director Tom Joslin, who died of AIDS before the autobiographical piece could be completed. Joslin's lover, Mark Massi, then attempted to finish the film, which explores the two men's life together as they both battled AIDS. Massi enlisted the help of Peter Friedman, one of Joslin's former students. But Massi also died before the work was finished, leaving Friedman to complete what the *Advocate* called "a relay race between death and art."

This is not, however, a clinical or sensationalist view of dying. It is much more the story of a tempestuous life of self-discovery and definition, and the loving relationship that made that adventure possible. Woven into the narrative of dying is a film Joslin made in his prime, the vehicle through which he came out and through which he challenged his family to acknowledge him and his lover. This earlier film, in its current context, also provokes thought about the short cultural history of public gayness in this century, and about the need for public recognition in order to achieve private peace.

As is P.O.V.'s tradition, the series is trying to make the airing of *Silverlake Life* more than just another broadcast. The series is working with local community and outreach groups to create call-in opportunities and discussion groups where people can share their reactions to the drama. "People have such strong reactions to this film," says Schneider. "They have to be able to talk about it with somebody."

Janice Tanaka's *Who's Going to Pay for These Donuts, Anyway?* (June 22), another intensely personal essay, explores the significance of finding her long-lost father. Once an up-and-coming professional, he has suffered an adulthood of mental illness punctuated by internment during World War II. Tanaka—aided by her children—reconstitutes memory by combining interview, home movies and newsreel footage with a mixture of text, distorted images from daily life and evocative images such as a teacup from a tea ceremony.

"My children and I," says Tanaka, "working together on this project, have perhaps not so ironically learned: when you have a past, it's easier to believe the present has

a reason."

The majority of films in the series are personal profiles, frequently by intimates, often exploring family relationships. *P.O.V.*'s celebrity item this year comes from Hollywood director Jonathan Demme, who profiles his cousin, a noted leftist clergyman. *Cousin Bobby* (August 24), almost studiously unpolished (Demme saying "uh huh," boom mikes dropping into the shot, occasional and apparently deliberate jerks in camera), travels with this Episcopalian minister who works in Harlem and who once worked closely with a later-murdered Black Panther. A pastiche of glimpses that makes no pretense of assembling a finished portrait, *Cousin Bobby* shows a man by turns noble, pathetic, embattled, endearing and nostalgic.

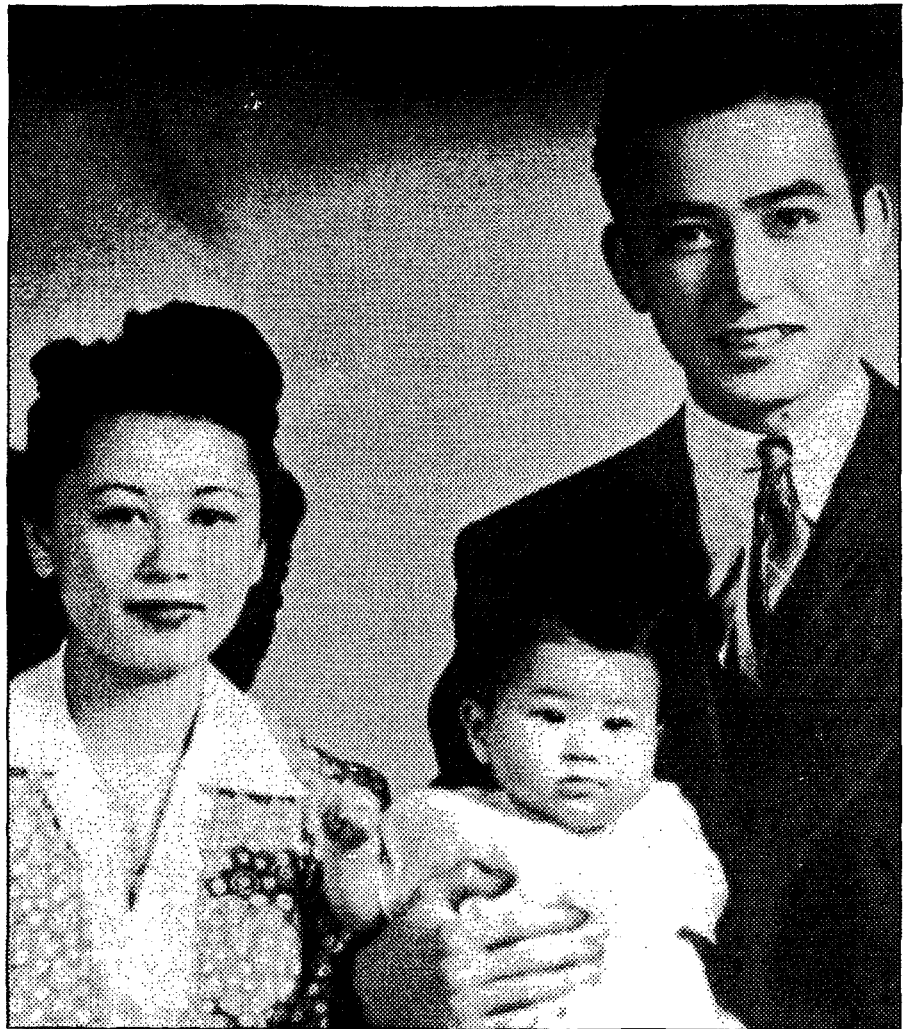
"I think that at least one member of every family should pick up a camera and do a portrait of at least one other member of that family," Demme says. "I think if enough people make films about each other, a certain amount of the animosity that exists out there might even be diluted a little bit."

Family filmmaking certainly involves an act of confidence on the part of the subject, one demonstrated impressively in *When Your Head's not a Head, It's a Nut* (June 29). Garth Stein follows his sister Corey, a sturdy and stubborn artist who is also an epileptic, through risky brain surgery that could make her normal—or leave her brain-damaged. Shot with a high-8 camera and with the gentle forbearance of an older sister, *When Your Head's Not a Head* is suffused with warm feeling.

Other profiles explore the complexities beyond the familiar in wildly different ways: for instance, *For Better or Worse* (July 13) about married couples who have celebrated their golden wedding anniversaries; and *Money Man* (August 3) featuring J.S.G. Boggs, an artist who makes imitation money and uses it as currency.

The series also continues to offer the issue-oriented, left-leaning documentaries that are the heritage of independent video and filmmaking. These include *Compassion in Exile*, about the Dalai Lama and human rights in Tibet (airing July 6, the Dalai Lama's birthday); *Building Bombs: The Legacy* (August 10), an update of the chilling and true tale of a nuclear weapons plant in South Carolina; and *Miami-Havana* (August 17).

The last is worth a look as an example of disingenuous



Janice Tanaka's *Who's Going To Pay For These Donuts, Anyway?*

social-issue filmmaking that reinforces the value of highly personal documentary. The filmmaker, Estela Bravo, a dedicated Fidelista whose children live in Cuba, has concocted a pseudo-network news documentary about Cubans in the U.S. and Miami. The filmmaker has located, almost exclusively, Cubans in the U.S. who want to return to Cuba and Cubans in Cuba who doggedly support the Revolution. She has narrated the piece with upbeat rhetoric that might as well have come right out of *Granma*, the Cuban government daily.

Bravo uses conventions of news editing both to erase her own shaping presence and to give her work the illusion of objectivity and comprehensiveness. *Miami-Havana*, while dealing with a subject of great drama and pain, does everything a thoughtful documentary ought not to do to its viewer. It lacks the integrity of the journalist who genuinely strives for balance and objectivity, and it fails to clearly frame the point of view.

As usual, it pays to check in to find out what surprises *P.O.V.* has in store. Its version of American culture resolutely refuses to cater to the safely splendid ethic too common on public TV.

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I N P R I N T

Yeltsin exposed

By John Feffer

In a Russia currently dominated by resurgent nationalism, laissez-faire liberalism and authoritarian populism, Boris Kagarlitsky has staked out a somewhat unusual position—as an independent socialist. While other members of the intelligentsia court the powerful for personal gain, he has continued to uphold the Russian intellectual tradition of altruistic iconoclasm. While others focus on Kremlin battles, he has sought to organize politically at the workplace. Feverishly active on so many fronts, he has managed to create the illusion of multiple Kagarlitskys. Pity Russia that it is only an illusion.

In his writings (including the books *The Thinking Reed* and *Farewell to Perestroika*), Kagarlitsky has chronicled the last, strangled gasps of empire and, in so doing, has provided a necessary antidote to the usual elite-driven descriptions of Soviet affairs. Kagarlitsky constantly reminded his Western readers during the salad days of *perestroika* that there was more to the Soviet Union than Gorbachev and his reform Communists. And now, as democracy falters in Moscow, he reminds us that there is more to Russia than Yeltsin and his neo-liberal coterie.

Kagarlitsky's latest book, *The Disintegration of the Monolith*, asks the big question: how democratic is Russia's most celebrated democrat? And answers it: not very. Concentrating on the period just before and after the August 1991 coup attempt, Kagarlitsky lays bare the liberal-populist consensus that until recently controlled Russia, attack-

ing members of the former power elite who still roam the corridors of power.

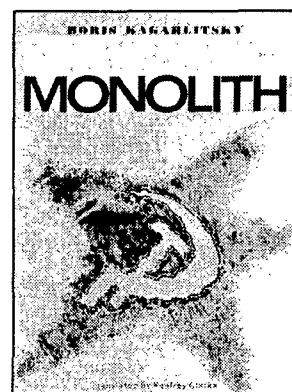
Where others see a decisive historical rupture—exemplified by the abortive coup, an outlawed Communist Party and an officially mothballed Soviet Union—Kagarlitsky calls attention to some disturbing continuities between the Gorbachev and Yeltsin eras. Yeltsin, like his predecessor, desires large-scale market-oriented economic reform (though the two would disagree about the pace); in order to propel this reform forward, Yeltsin, like Gorbachev, has resorted to the political trick of demanding additional executive powers to overcome resistance from opposing political blocs.

But Kagarlitsky goes beyond these surface parallels. The current Yeltsin economic program has not been developed for the reasons so often cited by the government: concern for popular welfare or a desire for economic progress. Rather, he writes, it is a trick of the old *nomenklatura* to seize state property, "a deal between thieves, of the most commonplace kind." And as for Yeltsin's autocratic style, Kagarlitsky argues that this is not just an occasional political tendency, but rather that it is bound up in the Russian president's whole political outlook, in the political structures he's created and in his approaches to problem solving.

Kagarlitsky's Yeltsin bears little resemblance to the Yeltsin of the Western press—a heroic, democratic Gulliver trying to throw off the restraints of proto-Communist Lilliputians in the Congress of People's Deputies. Drinking bouts and other indiscretions aside, this Yeltsin has been offered to the world as the only hope for a democratic Russia.

The contrasting picture that Kagarlitsky provides is that of a liberal authoritarian: a Russian Fujimori. Like the Peruvian autocrat, Yeltsin has insisted that a strong hand is needed to rein in inflation and hold back the forces of chaos. The Russian leader realizes, instinctively or because those with the dollars have been whispering in his ears, that the current wave of Westernization sweeping Russia requires an emphasis on market over democracy—for how else will economic reform be pushed through over the objections of a population that stands to lose so much? According to Kagarlitsky, the staples of Western coverage—responsible economic reform, Yeltsin's democratic credentials, the demise of the *nomenklatura*—are all a sham.

Kagarlitsky's thoroughgoing critique is more than the sour grapes of an embittered dissi-



The Disintegration of the Monolith

By Boris Kagarlitsky
Verso

169 pp., \$17.95

dent barred from participating in Russia's great transformation. One need only shift one's gaze to Kagarlitsky's west: the countries of Eastern Europe, their reforms predating Russia's by several years, have already borne out many of his points. There, too, hastily prepared market reforms have gutted the region's economies. There, too, elected governments reign under nearly identical slogans of democracy and liberalization while championing, in practice, frequently undemocratic and illiberal policies.

And there, too, dissidents like Kagarlitsky, who worked long and hard in the periods of greatest adversity, have once again been exiled to the political wilderness. Former East German dissidents have found no political role in the current unified German state. Activists from the Civic Forum have by and large been squeezed out of the Czech government. New technocrats and proto-politicians have rushed in to fill the void created by the fall of communism.

It was inevitable, given the lack of professional political experience among the dissidents, that the new politicians would be drawn from the ranks of the old. Without a Solidarity-style opposition or the well-organized political dissent of Hungary under Kadar, Russia has often had recourse to dip into the Soviet barrel for its new elite.

So, on the large issues, Kagarlitsky hits the mark. On some of the more intricate questions, however, he becomes overwhelmed by his own vitriol. For instance, the descriptions of Yeltsin's possible complicity in the August coup attempt—which he thinks was stage-managed by Yeltsin to eliminate all the old institutions, discredit the conservative forces and place himself at the head of a revolutionary movement—give off a faint odor of paranoia. While such a tactical alliance between the Russian president and the Brezhnevites cannot be dismissed out of hand, the evidence that Kagarlitsky marshals depends on hearsay and conjecture. There is enough to demonstrate Yeltsin's mix of authoritarianism and opportunism without resorting to the concoction of baroque plots.

In his haste to brand as "neo-liberal" all forces he personally and politically opposes, Kagarlitsky also fails to recognize that elements of both the old *nomenklatura* and the new Social Democratic Party have emerged as the chief opposition to Yeltsin. Created in June 1992, the Civic Union coalition includes former apparatchiks, representatives of the military industrial complex and the old-fashioned managerial elite, and a sprinkling of social democrats—all actors that Kagarlitsky dismisses as advocates of



shock therapy. Though embracing a number of uncomfortably Russophilic positions, this group has proven a more effective counterforce to Yeltsin than the authentic labor party that Kagarlitsky is helping, unfortunately without much success, to build.

Attempting to find fault with Russia's new political elite, Kagarlitsky also accentuates the tactical and leaves relatively unaddressed the international factors that have pushed the country in a particular direction at a particular pace. The West has placed great pressures on the former Soviet bloc, sometimes in obvious ways (the direct linkage of aid to particular privatization programs and entrepreneur funds) and sometimes indirectly (the promotion of monetarist advisers like Jeffrey Sachs and Anders Aslund over those more supportive of gradualism and industrial policy).

Shock therapy was not therefore a direct result of the craven guile of Russian neo-liberals. If the U.S. government or the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development had told Yeltsin to ease up on the throttle or protect certain key industries through a new system of subsidies, the Russian government probably would have complied without significant grumbles.

Finally, Kagarlitsky is irritatingly vague about his alternatives—self-management, strengthened social guarantees, protected human rights, greater democratic control

of the economy. These suggestions are offered parenthetically, with the sketchiness of an oppositionist accustomed to shouting slogans from the sidelines rather than fashioning the compromises of concrete politics.

Despite these failings, *The Disintegration of the Monolith* is an impressive synthesis of recent Russian developments. It is a shame that Boris Kagarlitsky's views are not more in vogue in Russia today. But it is too often the fate of such nay-sayers to patrol the ideological margins of their countries, their writings always more effective than their politics, their critiques generally more resonant than their prescriptions, their ideas unfortunately more popular abroad than at home.

John Feffer is the author of *Shock Waves: Eastern Europe After the Revolutions* (South End Press).

Feminism gets tenure

By Nancy Folbre

Thirty years after the publication of Betty Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique*, the feminist movement has left in its wake a confusing array of successes and failures. Equal opportunity legislation and affirmative action have dramatically increased young women's access to professional and managerial occupations. Within the academy, new cohorts of female graduate students and faculty have invaded traditionally male disciplines. Intellectual enthusiasm for feminist theory has unified a wide range of innovative research that defies traditional disciplinary boundaries.

The successes of feminism have been evident not only in academia, where younger feminists have helped to institutionalize and expand women's studies programs, but also in the professions, where more and more women have found an access that previously had been denied.

But these partial successes, ironically, have accentuated already existing differences. Throughout the '80s, the upward mobility of individuals affluent enough to collect elite diplomas highlighted the poor wages and working conditions of women stuck in the pink-collar ghetto. As female yuppies prospered, most women raising children on their own sank deeper into poverty. Earnings inequality increased among full-time women workers. Public assistance to the poor was cut. Domestic servants (a. k. a. nannies) became affordable again—especially if you could pay them under the table, avoiding social security and unemployment insurance.

Within academia, white women from middle- and upper-class backgrounds have entered the professorate in far greater numbers than other targets of affirmative action. As feminism became institutionalized, the collective assault on androcentrism in the curriculum began to seem less urgent,

and the rush to stake claims in the new territory increased. Ah, the luxuries of debating one another, instead of trying to impress male colleagues! But once Professor Feminism got tenure, her new job security made her more accountable for her own racism and ethnocentrism, more vulnerable to her own critique of institutional privilege.

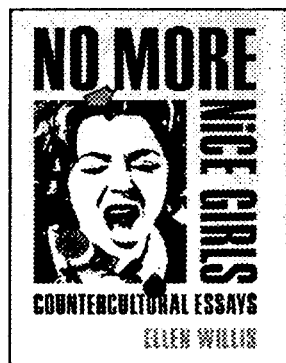
One of the few political posters left on my office wall says "Class consciousness is knowing what side of the fence you're on. Class analysis is knowing who is there with you." With divisions of class compounded by divisions of race, gender, nationality, age and sexual orientation, it's hard enough to even figure out where we are, much less who is there with us.

What kind of map can feminist theorists provide? For their part, Marianne Hirsch and Evelyn Fox Keller, the editors of the anthology *Conflicts in Feminism*, seem like happy campers in the Decade of Difference, celebrating the sheer number of debates that preoccupy feminist scholars these days, with topics ranging from epistemology to "conceptive technology," from interracial rape to psychoanalysis to pornography.

Amidst the general optimism, some apprehension surfaces. Does a theory that moves in too many directions at once lose its forward momentum? Hirsch and Keller raise this question like a banner in their concluding essay, which urges feminists to practice conflict more constructively. All well and good. But they don't seem to realize that the arena of conflict they describe is entirely theoretical and academic—and that politics seem to have dropped from the equation.

As bell hooks charges, "Many feminists have been distracted by the toil of building careers instead of the toil of building a movement. It is so much easier for privileged people to change their individual lives and careers than to remain engaged in the long-term struggle against inequalities from which they individually benefit in a secondary way."

Pretty indisputable, especially juxtaposed against another essay that comfortably begins with the very picture of privilege: "I'm sitting on the terrace of a stone house in Provence,



No More Nice Girls:
Countercultural Essays
By Ellen Willis
Wesleyan/University
Press of New England
281 pp., \$22.95

Conflicts in Feminism
Edited by Marianne
Hirsch & Evelyn Fox
Keller
Routledge
393 pp., \$15.95

Race, Gender and Work:
A Multicultural Economic History of Women in the United States
By Teresa Amott & Julie
Matthaei
South End Press
433 pp., \$16.00

looking out at a valley of vineyards and fruit trees." With so many feminists ensconced in the academy, hooks and Mary Childers observe, the vocabulary of feminism is becoming increasingly esoteric. Here again, the other essayists provide the proof. "I will be locating myself," one writes, "in a discursively polemical (but personally irenic) relation. ..."

Ultimately, this volume disappoints. Most of its contributors seem too enamored of the ivory tower, as though they've forgotten other forms of stimulation. The important choice is not between conflict and consensus but

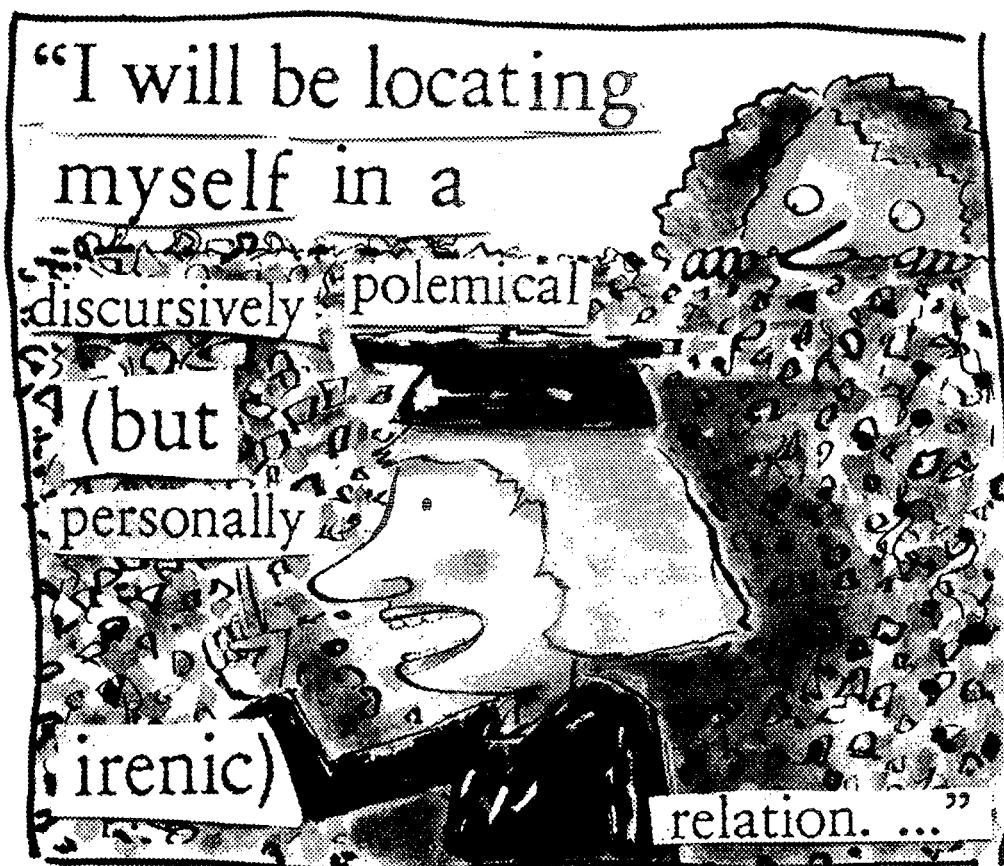
between two distinct sites of conflict—the academy and the world beyond. Feminist theorists used to run back and forth, huffing and puffing, pushing and poking, teaching and listening. Now, with our captive women's studies majors, we begin to seem, if not quite boring, then awfully sedentary.

Thank goddess, then, for *No More Nice Girls*, which brings some of the fierce intellectual and political energy of New York City activism to bear on feminist concerns. Ellen Willis knows theory; she also knows how to cut to the chase, especially where issues of sexuality and reproductive rights are concerned.

In "Identity Crisis," a sympathetic critique of identity politics, Willis warns against the kind of relativism that preoccupation with group membership can bring. She insists on the importance of some universal values, particularly "a commitment to individual freedom and egalitarian self-government in every area of social, economic and cultural life."

Willis deftly shows how these principles are at stake in debates over sexuality and staunchly defends sexual pleasures of all persuasions against authoritarian moralism. She stakes out a middle ground between prudish puritanism and irresponsible forms of sexual libertarianism, offering affectionate interpretations of Freud and Reich to embellish her argument that sexual liberation should be a feminist goal.

Needless to say, Willis is not big on family values. She is



at her best in her scathing commentary on "pro-life feminism" and the fetal rights movement. Her essays are a brilliant example of the kind of stubborn advocacy that survived the insults of the '80s and helped turn the tide this year in favor of re-establishing women's reproductive rights.

Willis clearly understands conservative fears that women's demands for individual rights are destabilizing a family and social system that may not be replaceable. Nice girls give up when they find that their needs conflict with those of others, but Willis bracingly urges us on. I just wish she could give us a few more specifics about where we are, or should be, going. "The family," she writes, "is a dying beast." But what will take its place? Are some new beasts being born?

For a New York radical, especially, Willis seems reluctant to move beyond issues of family and sexuality to other political and economic issues. Though she often invokes race and class differences, she explores them only in one essay, "Sisters Under the Skin," a compelling commentary on the insights of recent black feminist writers such as Gloria Joseph and bell hooks. Clearly, we need to know more about the big picture.

One of the few recent feminist books to make a spirited attempt to untangle the various forms of oppression is Teresa Amott and Julie Matthaei's *Race, Gender and Work*, a social and economic history of the United States that insists on the importance of gender, racial-ethnic and

class hierarchies inherited from the past. Their narrative combines the experiences of Native American, Chicana, European-American, African-American, Asian-American and Puerto Rican women with an account of United States economic development.

The recurrent themes are discrimination, exploitation and resistance; though the structure is a bit formulaic, the style is informal and lively. Amott and Matthaei often let women speak for themselves, as with the striking workers at a brassiere company in 1940 who demanded "an uplift in wages because the company keeps us flat-busted."

Most importantly, the book effectively integrates the experiences of women of color within the larger framework of struggles against diverse oppressions: Sioux and Cheyenne women protesting the privatization of tribal land, black women's clubs organizing against the lynching of black men, Chicana labor organizers winning higher wages for beet workers and pecan shellers.

At times, this heroism seems stylized, as though we are looking at a Diego Rivera mural, but the villainy is never oversimplified. The narrative suggests that men and women of diverse class and race backgrounds often act to pursue their collective interests at the expense of others, in ways defined by historical circumstance. White feminists have never been immune to racial or ethnic discrimination. But then, many racial, ethnic and class-based movements have succumbed to expedient forms of sexism.

This emphasis on complex identities, competing alle-

giances and conflicting interests doesn't diminish the significance of gender-based inequalities but, rather, places them within a larger context of unjust structures of constraint. It helps explain why many forms of solidarity—those based on class and race, as well as gender—often prove tenuous for those who are doubly, even triply disadvantaged. It suggests that successful political movements must build on principles solid enough to withstand the corrosive, divisive impact of short-term self-interest.

This is activism without illusions. Amott and Matthaei have a long track record as political activists and educators, as well as scholars. They outline specifics that could potentially unify a new constituency: redistributive inheritance and wealth taxes, family leaves from work, full employment, greater worker ownership and participation, higher pay for traditionally female jobs such as child care and teaching, reparations for racial-ethnic groups whose land and wealth have been swiped.

A pretty feisty program, coming from a couple of tenured college professors. A pretty optimistic vision, for a country that doesn't even have national health insurance yet. *Race, Gender and Work* advances the ideals that socialist and social democratic feminists defended long ago, with a consistency and scope that feminism alone cannot claim. ◀

Nancy Folbre is a professor of economics at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, and works with the Center for Popular Economics. Her book, *Who Pays for the Kids? Gender and the Structures of Constraint*, is forthcoming from Routledge.

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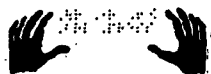
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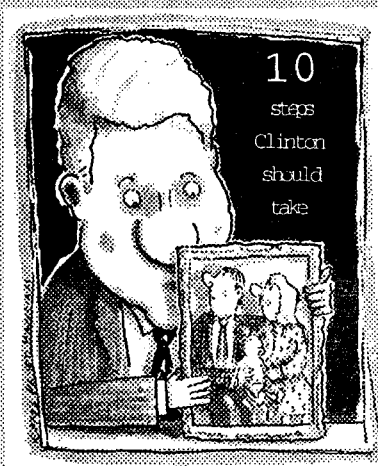
"Who wants to ride a through train if it's a through train to hell?"

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I N T H E E N D



Our Lips are Sealed

By David Futrelle

BOSTON (AP) Rep. Barney Frank (D-MA), one of two openly gay congressmen, says keeping silent about sexual orientation may be an acceptable condition for gays in the military.

"The right of a Marine to declare his membership in the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force and wear the appropriate insignia has never been a part of this issue," Frank told the Boston Globe.

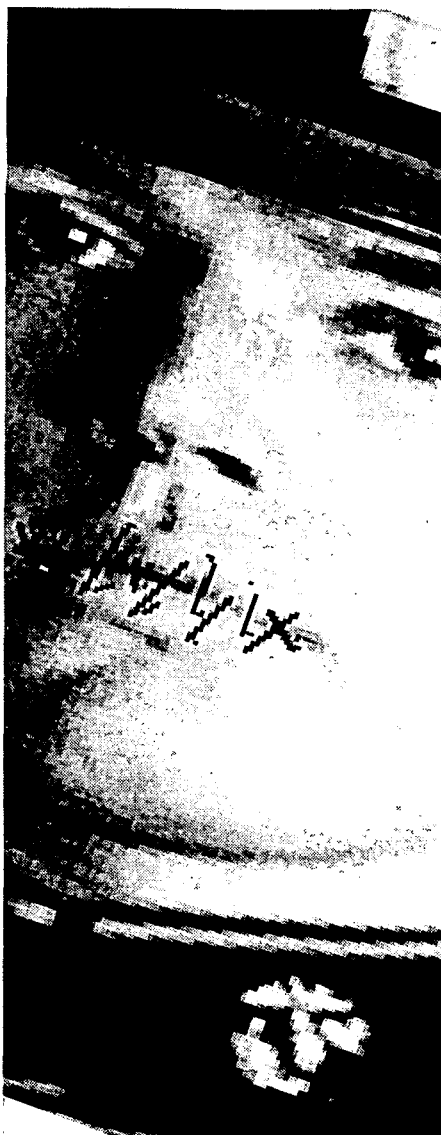
"We are not talking about people who are burning with the desire to announce their sexual orientation," the Democrat said in the interview published Saturday. "That's not why you go into the military."

I have a dream.

I have a dream that one day in the office of Sam Nunn, an office now cluttered with nervous men in suits, little gay soldiers and sailors will be able to join hands with little straight soldiers and sailors, without anyone really knowing which of them is which. And no one asking or telling. I have a dream today.

I have a dream that one day this nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed: "Our lips are sealed." This is no time to engage in the luxury of cooling off, or to take the tranquilizing drug of gradualism: now is the time not to speak. Now is the time not to ask, not to tell.

I have a dream that one day, in the showers of our great army barracks, the water shall be neither too hot nor too cold, and the tile surfaces will be shiny



and bright and not too covered with mildew, and gay men and straight men will share soap together, and not one of them will publicly admire the buttocks of another, except in the spirit of brotherhood. I have a dream today.

This is our hope. With this faith we will be able to work together, pray together, shower together, sleep together—uh, in separate bunks, I mean—without anyone the wiser.

This will be the day when all of God's children will be able to sing with new meaning: "It doesn't matter what they say/In the jealous games people play/Our lips are sealed." Our lips are sealed in the halls of Congress. Our lips are sealed in the mess halls of Fort Bragg. Our lips are sealed, especially, in the bunks and the showers of our great naval vessels on the high seas. In every barrack, our lips are sealed, our eyes are averted and our knees are locked together.

When our lips are sealed, as per official military protocol, we will be able to speed up that day when all of God's children, gay men and straight men, butches and femmes, rubber fetishists and those who prefer leather, those who do it standing up and those who prefer the missionary position, will be able to join, um, hands—without anyone disclosing any of these various proclivities or mentioning the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force or RuPaul or Judy Garland or any of those other dead giveaways—and sing, in the words of that great Go-Go's song, "Our Lips Are Sealed, Our Lips Are Sealed!"